

Foxyards Primary School

Foxyards Road, Tipton, DY4 8BH

Inspection dates 21–22 November 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- The quality of teaching is not yet securely good enough to lead to good progress.
- Progress slows after Nursery and Reception because teaching is not always as good in the later years.
- Though they have risen now, standards dropped after the last inspection.
- Some lessons are not demanding enough or move at a slow pace. The comments in teachers' marking are not always clear enough to help pupils improve their work.
- An unusually high number of staff are on maternity leave at the moment. Until permanent staff have returned and are teaching in the new ways the school has developed, improvements are not secure.
- School leaders manage temporary staff well, but cannot yet ensure that the teachers who return to school after long periods of leave are quickly brought up to speed with new procedures.
- Subject leaders do not play a strong enough role in checking teaching quality and achievement in their subjects.
- Governors have not ensured that all policy documents are regularly updated.

The school has the following strengths

- In the last year, the headteacher and assistant headteachers have drawn up good improvement plans and have used them well to improve teaching and so raise standards.
- Much of the teaching inspectors saw was good.
- Children in the Nursery and Reception get a good start to their school life. They make good progress thanks to good teaching.
- Pupils feel safe and behave well in lessons and around the school. Attendance is good.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 19 lessons taught by 17 teachers.
- Joint observations were carried out with the headteacher and the two assistant headteachers.
- Inspectors heard pupils read and looked closely at their work in books and on display.
- Meetings were held with governors, senior leaders, staff and pupils. An inspector held a conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of documentation, including improvement plans and self-evaluation, as well as assessment data from the monitoring of pupils' progress. Documents detailing the school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils were also reviewed.
- They took into account the responses of 24 parents to the online questionnaire (Parent View), the school's own parental questionnaires, and 22 completed by staff.

Inspection team

David Speakman, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Richard Boswell

Additional Inspector

Pamela Matty

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are White British. A few come from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average. No pupils are currently at the early stages of learning English.
- A broadly average proportion of pupils are supported by the pupil premium, which is additional funding for children in local authority care, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those who have a parent in the armed forces.
- The proportions of pupils supported through school action, school action plus or a statement of special educational needs are all broadly average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- At the time of the inspection eight temporary teachers were working in the school, seven of them covering maternity leave.
- There is a breakfast club for pupils, run the governing body.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching requiring improvement so that all pupils make consistently good progress, by:
 - choosing resources carefully so all pupils have the opportunity to practise new skills
 - improving the marking of pupils' work in all subjects to the good levels already seen in English and mathematics
 - making sure that all lessons move at a quick pace and are well organised
 - giving teachers the opportunity to observe and learn from outstanding teaching, including that already present in the school.
- Raise standards at the end of Year 6 so they are above average at the end of the current and subsequent school years by:
 - giving pupils who are capable of harder work more demanding tasks and activities in lessons
 - giving pupils more chance to practise their writing in subjects other than English.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by making sure that:
 - governors review policies regularly so that they are all up to date
 - all leaders responsible for key areas of the school regularly check teaching and learning
 - teachers returning from long-term leave get up-to-date training on the school's procedures so that the current rate of improvement is sustained.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' achievement requires improvement. Pupils are now making improved progress, but this has only recently been the case and teaching is not yet consistently good enough to sustain these improvements.
- Children join the Nursery with skills, knowledge and understanding below and sometimes well below the levels typical for their age. They make good progress and by the time they reach the end of Reception, standards are broadly average.
- After Reception progress slows because teaching is not always good enough. Standards in Years 2 and 6 are now broadly average. There has been a slow but steady improvement in recent years at Year 2, but standards at the end of Year 6 have been more variable, and the national test results were below average in 2011 in the key subjects of English and mathematics.
- The headteacher responded quickly to address the 2011 dip in attainment. The actions taken have been effective and as a result, underachievement has been eliminated and some pupils in most year groups are beginning to make better progress than is expected nationally in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Like that of other groups, the progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs requires improvement. They often receive good support but when they are in lessons with the rest of the class and time is wasted or organisation poor, their progress slows. Pupils supported by pupil premium funding also make similar progress to others in the school.
- There are some strengths in pupils' reading, particularly for younger pupils. These use their knowledge of letters and the sounds they make well to read unfamiliar words. The school promotes reading for pleasure, so pupils are keen and enjoy reading. Older pupils are confident readers.
- Pupils' work shows that they are starting to make good progress in writing. It is well presented and interesting to read. Spelling and the use of grammar are mostly accurate. However, the quality of writing in topic work is not as good as in formal English lessons.
- In mathematics, standards are also rising. Older pupils work confidently with numbers and use calculation skills well to solve 'real' problems.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement as it is not securely good. It is occasionally inadequate and though much good and outstanding teaching was seen during the inspection, the proportion of temporary teachers seen was unusually high. Senior leaders have worked effectively with current staff, including temporary teachers, to improve teaching but the teachers who are temporarily on leave are, inevitably, not yet familiar with the school's new procedures.
- In Nursery and Reception, teaching is consistently good. Teachers and support assistants work well together. They plan jointly and build on children's previous experiences well. Children usually learn effectively in the Nursery through investigating and exploring after short introductions from the teacher. In Reception, there is more direct input from the staff and

because children are grouped by ability for literacy and mathematics, they make good progress.

- In Key Stages 1 and 2 the quality of teaching varies more. Where it is less effective, teachers do not always use time efficiently and do not move pupils, particularly those who are more-able, on to the next steps in learning quickly enough. Too much time is spent explaining what some pupils already know and can do. Sometimes there are not enough resources to support practical work or to demonstrate a teaching point, for example in information and communication technology. Occasionally, poor organisation means that children have to wait too long for their turn and lose interest.
- Where teaching is more effective, the pace is brisk and pupils develop their skills, knowledge and understanding quickly. They have plenty of opportunities to consolidate new learning in interesting and engaging activities, such as when Year 6 explored percentage discounts in 'real life' situations. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can do and set demanding tasks for them. Teachers keep them aware of how well they are progressing and ask questions skilfully to make pupils think and develop their understanding, building on what they already know.
- Teaching assistants know disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs well. They are fully aware of the approaches that work best with each one. Where pupils have behavioural difficulties, they support them well and intervene readily when needed.
- The marking of pupils' work requires improvement. In English and mathematics, teachers' comments are helpful to pupils in improving their work and pupils respond well. In other subjects, and in topic work, marking is more general and teachers do not comment enough on the quality of writing. Too much use of worksheets means that pupils do not get enough chance to practise and improve the writing skills they have learnt in English lessons.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and work well individually and in groups, even when the pace of learning slows. Just occasionally, they become unsettled when they have completed their work and are left with nothing to do.
- Pupils feel safe in school. Although a small number of parents expressed concerns through the inspection online questionnaire about how the school deals with bullying, the pupils themselves are not concerned. They say bullying is rare and when necessary, staff deal with it quickly and effectively. Safeguarding practices are consistently thorough and effective.
- Pupils have a clear awareness of how to maintain their own and others' safety. Good personal support helps pupils whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable to feel safe and fully involved in their school work.
- Attendance is good and above the national average. Pupils are punctual in coming to school. Those attending the breakfast club are looked after well and prepared effectively for their day in school.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is developed well. The school emphasises respect and conveys a strong sense that everyone is important. It gives all pupils good care and support, and opportunities to reflect on their learning and the wider world. Pupils know the difference between right and wrong. They work well together, respecting each other's views and ideas and showing courtesy towards others.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because, though senior leaders check and evaluate the school's performance well, other leaders such as those in charge of subjects do not all share the responsibility for checking teaching and learning. Also, in their drive to improve pupils' education and raise standards, the leaders and governors have failed to ensure that some important documents have been reviewed and some staff training kept fully up to date.
- The senior leadership team's recent checks on the quality of teaching have led to improved teaching, better achievement and rising standards. Senior leaders have done particularly well in improving teaching, considering the high proportion of temporary teachers, but have not yet devised an agreed strategy to update returning teachers on the new ways of working so that the pace of improvement continues uninterrupted. However, they are aware that they now have some good and outstanding teaching in the school, which can be used as a model for other teachers to observe.
- Senior leaders systematically check the progress made by all groups of pupils, so they and the governors have an accurate picture of where their improvement plan is effective and where they need to focus attention. Teachers are held to account for the progress made by their pupils through regular pupil progress meetings. Teachers understand the importance of the new systems and readily acknowledge that they have helped to improve their practice. They use information on progress at year group, class and individual pupil level to check learning.
- The use of the pupil premium funding is linked directly to the school's 'raising attainment' plan, and is starting to have a clear impact on progress and narrowing the gap in attainment between eligible pupils and the national average. It has been used to increase the support given by teaching assistants, for example to give pupils more opportunities to read for pleasure.
- The local authority has supported the school well over the last year. The headteacher requested advice when the number of temporary teachers was rising. The local authority provided funding to enable the headteacher to seek support from external consultants and the 'North Dudley Learning Partnership', a group of schools to which Foxyards belongs. They worked successfully with the school in four main areas: stabilising staffing; improving mathematics; building leaders' capacity to improve; and tackling teaching in need of improvement.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - In most respects, governance is thorough and the governors' oversight of school performance is good. Governors both support and hold the headteacher to account, making use of a range of information sources to ensure they have a full picture and accurate view of school performance and how it compares to that of similar schools nationally. Governors have received good training to help them fulfil their responsibilities and have therefore been able to help implement the restructuring of leadership and the process by which staff performance is checked and linked to pay rises. They make a significant contribution to school improvement themselves, and have a clear understanding of how well each member of staff is contributing. They are aware of how the school is using its available money and know, for example, what impact the pupil premium is having.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	103788
Local authority	Dudley
Inspection number	404906

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	343
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kaye Bickerdike
Headteacher	Sammy O'Gorman
Date of previous school inspection	17 January 2011
Telephone number	01384 818740
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