

Foxdell Junior School

Dallow Road, Luton, Bedfordshire LU1 1UP

Inspection dates

5–6 July 2017

| Overall effectiveness | Requires improvement |
|--|----------------------|
| Effectiveness of leadership and management | Requires improvement |
| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment | Requires improvement |
| Personal development, behaviour and welfare | Good |
| Outcomes for pupils | Requires improvement |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Outstanding |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- As national expectations have risen, the school has not sustained an outstanding standard of education for pupils.
- Leaders and governors' plans for improvement do not fully identify the key priorities to bring about the necessary improvements quickly.
- Governors do not have a sharp enough grasp of the progress of different groups of pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, to hold the school stringently to account.
- The overall quality of teaching varies and is not yet consistently good. The best teaching in the school is not shared widely enough.
- The expectations of some teachers are not high enough. Too often, teachers are not precise enough in matching work to pupils' abilities to ensure that all pupils make good progress.
- Teachers do not use assessment information as well as they could to plan learning, track progress or provide feedback that deepens and extends pupils' curiosity and skills. As a result, pupils do not achieve as well as they should in reading, writing and mathematics.

The school has the following strengths

- The ambition and drive of school leaders is establishing a culture of improvement that is understood by all. As a result, Foxdell Junior is an improving school.
- Leaders have put into place a wide range of well-chosen initiatives that are beginning to have a positive impact in many aspects of the school.
- Safeguarding is effective. Staff are well trained. Pupils said that they feel safe, and almost all parents agree.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils have positive attitudes to their learning and want to do well.
- The wider curriculum is well designed and provides stimulating activities that engage pupils. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a key strength of the school.
- Pupils' personal development and their well-being are given a high priority. There is an ethos of care and nurture throughout the school, which leads to pupils feeling well supported and valued by staff.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen pupils' progress and achievement in reading, writing and mathematics to meet at least the national average by ensuring that teachers:
 - accurately use the school's assessment system to track pupils' progress
 - use this information to set work that is well matched to pupils' needs, particularly for disadvantaged pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils
 - provide pupils with better opportunities to act on feedback given to consolidate and deepen their learning.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - making sure that the school's improvement plans focus on the most essential priorities to ensure rapid improvement
 - making sure that the stronger practice evident in teaching and learning is shared more widely across the school
 - strengthening the capacity of governors to provide the right degree of challenge to assure themselves that pupils from different groups and in different year groups are achieving as well as they should and that any additional funding is helping to overcome underperformance quickly.
- An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.
- An external review of the use of the pupil premium should be undertaken to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The school has had an erratic journey since the previous inspection. Pupil numbers on roll have risen considerably. Leaders have managed change with variable success. For example, difficulties in introducing assessment procedures in the national curriculum 2014 have hindered the school's progress. Leaders' actions since September 2016 have led to improvements. Leaders are getting the school back on track. However, a legacy of underachievement over at least a year for some pupils, although diminishing, remains.
- In 2016, leaders were disappointed with the end of key stage 2 test results in reading, writing and mathematics, which were lower than the national average. Leaders accurately analysed that teachers' planning and checks on pupils' achievement had not been linked closely enough to the raised expectations of the national curriculum. Since September, leaders have acted with greater precision to address this. Teachers have received training on national curriculum requirements, and their increased knowledge means that they now plan lessons that are in line with national expectations. Consequently, rates of progress are accelerating, but not for all pupil groups or across all subjects.
- Current support from the local authority is having a clear impact on improving teaching and leadership. However, this has only been effectively in place since September 2016. The local authority could have provided more focused support earlier to identify weaknesses in the school's provision and strengthen the pace for improvement.
- The school's current plans for improvement list many actions, rather than a robust strategy with clear priorities based on the predicted impact that planned actions will have on pupils' achievement. This means that it is difficult for those monitoring the success of the plan, including governors, to check that actions are leading to sustained and substantial improvement.
- Not all leaders and teachers have a firm understanding of the school's assessment reporting system. Additionally, some teachers are over cautious when assessing pupils' progress. As a result, the school's assessment information does not accurately show when pupils are making rapid progress, and when they are not. Although leaders monitor pupils' progress by undertaking other checks, such as looking at work in pupils' books, the inaccurate progress data blurs leaders' ability to correctly evaluate the impact of their actions.
- Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils have been variable. The additional funding for disadvantaged pupils has started to have a positive effect. Leaders use the funding to identify barriers to learning and have put effective pastoral support in place, such as the breakfast club, lunchtime nurture groups and access to extra-curricular opportunities. However, there is still more to do to prioritise funding so that widespread shortcomings in pupils' academic achievement are overcome and disadvantaged pupils make more rapid progress to catch up with their peers and other pupils nationally.

- The inclusion leader ensures that adequate plans and actions are in place for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Additional funding is deployed well. However, the quality of pupils' support is variable across year groups because the use of assessment information is inconsistent and leaders do not have a clear picture of which interventions are the most effective.
- The interim executive headteacher and interim deputy headteacher are determined to improve the school, so that all pupils achieve their very best. They have formed a strong relationship and, together with middle leaders, staff, parents and pupils, are changing the culture and ethos of the school.
- Subject leaders for English and mathematics have recently received training from the local authority. They now more confidently monitor the quality of teaching in their subjects and have an increasing impact in effectively raising the standards of learning. However, it is too early to assess the impact of their work.
- The school's curriculum, with its wide range of enrichment activities and displays around the school, promotes pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development well. These features prepare pupils positively for life in modern Britain. For example, Year 6 pupils were observed practising their leavers' assembly and were confidently performing its anti-racism message. In a Year 5 English lesson, pupils were discussing a poem about tolerance of differences. Pupils are mindful of the school's values and the atmosphere that leaders and staff want to create in the school to help them to learn successfully. This is having a positive impact on the rate of pupils' progress and their attitudes towards learning.
- Leaders have made effective use of the additional sport funding. Training has been provided to support teachers in building their confidence and skills to teach physical and sporting activities. Opportunities have been organised for pupils to take part in competitive sports, both in school and against pupils from other local schools. An increasing number of pupils now regularly take part in sporting activities and understand the benefit of sport for their health and personal development.

Governance of the school

- Recently, there have been several vacancies on the governing body, which means that current governors have to undertake many roles and responsibilities. However, as seen in minutes of the governing body meetings over the previous 12 months, not enough time has been spent on discussing how well pupils are learning. Governors do not have a sufficiently clear grasp of the attainment and progress of different groups of pupils, including those who are disadvantaged. While information about pupils' achievement is available, this is not used strategically enough to hold the school to account.
- Governors are committed to improving accountability and are now starting to offer a higher level of challenge to school leaders about the school's performance.
- Governors are supportive of the leadership team and undertake visits to the school to monitor the curriculum, meet with subject leaders and check, for example, safeguarding arrangements.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Since the interim executive headteacher took up her role at the school, she has introduced much to ensure that safeguarding of pupils is given the highest priority. Rightly, she has ensured that current government expectations of safety, policies and procedures are firmly in place. As a result, pupils are safe and well cared for.
- The interim executive headteacher and other leaders have developed an ethos where staff share responsibility for safeguarding and are confident to raise any concerns. Procedures are working well. Records are detailed and completed diligently. Confidential records on staff and pupils are kept securely.
- Staff receive regular training to keep them abreast of any updates in statutory guidance.
- Staff and all adults who come into regular contact with children are vetted carefully prior to appointment. All of the statutory checks are made to ensure their suitability to work with children. Staff files have been checked thoroughly to ensure that all of the required information is stored centrally.
- All staff are confident in raising concerns and record them properly. The designated lead professionals for safeguarding follow up concerns quickly and refer them on to children's services if appropriate.
- Documentation, including individual pupil's case files, is detailed and kept in good chronological order, to provide a thorough record of incidents over time. Checks are made regularly to ensure that follow-up actions on open cases are timely and that no pupils slip through the net.
- The school's family workers are diligent in ensuring that vulnerable pupils and their families receive the pastoral support that they need from the school and outside agencies.
- All parents who spoke to inspectors, and almost all who had completed the school's own survey, agreed that the school is a safe place for their children.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because there is too much variability and it is not consistently good across the school. Pupils make uneven progress and do not achieve as well as they could from their starting points.
- Not all teachers have sufficiently high expectations of what pupils can, and should, achieve. Where this is the case, teachers set work that is not well matched to the varying abilities of the pupils in the class. For example, the most able pupils are not always provided with activities that offer sufficient challenge. Some pupils finish work quickly and say that they find learning easy.
- A wide range of strategies have been introduced to improve teaching, but these are not embedded in all classes because leaders are not monitoring closely enough to

check that teachers are adopting them. It is clear that some teachers have specific skills and expertise. However, these strengths are not shared widely enough. As a result, the quality of teaching across the school varies, and the achievement of pupils remains uneven.

- The school's assessment systems have been developed to reflect the changes at a national level. Leaders are beginning to use assessment information to analyse the performance of different groups and drive improvements in teaching. However, teachers require more time to familiarise themselves with the expectations of the revised national curriculum and ensure that the assessments they are making about pupils' progress are accurate.
- Where teaching is stronger, staff use questioning skilfully to check pupils' understanding and take their learning forward. In addition, pupils also receive detailed feedback on their work in line with the school's policy. This effectively helps pupils to deepen their understanding and make thoughtful responses and improvements to their work. However, this does not happen across the year groups and in different subjects.
- Better teaching has also resulted in some pupils making accelerated progress in their writing, particularly for pupils in Year 6. However, there is still some way to travel for all pupils to reach age-related expectations.
- Following staff training, the improved teaching of mathematics is developing pupils' knowledge of number facts and calculations. More recently, the increased focus on developing pupils' reasoning skills is beginning to support improvement in pupils' outcomes.
- The learning environment that staff create for pupils is well organised, attractive and engaging. In classrooms and across the school, displays of all subject areas celebrate pupils' achievements and remind them of all that they have learned.
- Teachers plan topics and learning experiences that engage pupils' interest and stimulate their curiosity.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are confident and use the school's values to help them to understand how they can have good friendships and be successful learners. One pupil commented that the school's values 'help us to grow up and be good people'.
- The school council actively promotes the school's values through a variety of projects. For example, it recently devised a rota for classes to help tidy the hall after the lunch break. A council member told inspectors, 'We are teaching everyone to be proud of our school and be respectful.'
- Pupils learn about the importance of healthy lifestyles and having regular exercise. They are encouraged to eat healthy food and take part in sports activities at playtimes.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is well developed through

cross-curricular themes, regular visitors to the school and off-site trips. Pupils understand the school's motto of, 'Be the best you can be.' They explained that it means, 'Treat people well and work hard.'

- Pupils reported that they have no concerns about bullying. They told inspectors that they feel safe and they know that their teachers will help them with any concerns.
- Pupils know how to stay safe in many situations, such as when they are online, and when they are crossing a road.
- Leaders ensure that pupils' emotional well-being is carefully considered and supported through a variety of effective nurture clubs. Parents appreciate the support their children receive to enable them to have a more positive integrated classroom experience.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Generally, pupils have good manners and are courteous and respectful to others. In a small number of lessons, some pupils lose focus only if their work is not well matched to their needs.
- The playground is well supervised at break and lunchtimes, and there is a wide range of engaging activities on offer. Pupils told inspectors, 'The best thing is we have loads of space to do different things' and, 'The grown-ups check on us all the time and they are in all the areas so we feel safe.' As a result, pupils play safely and well together.
- At lunchtime, the dining hall is an orderly place. Pupils enjoy socialising while eating their lunch sensibly.
- Overall, attendance is broadly in line with the national average, as is the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent. The vast majority of pupils arrive at school on time and are eager to learn.
- The attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is improving and moving closer to the national average. This is because the school is monitoring the attendance of these pupils closely and working well with families to provide appropriate support.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Work in pupils' books and the school's most recent assessments of reading, writing and mathematics show that, while improving, there are too many inconsistencies in pupils' attainment and progress, including the proportions of pupils working at greater depth.
- In 2016, standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 were below those seen nationally. Too many pupils who left key stage 1 at and above the expected levels of attainment made less than expected progress in reading and writing.
- The most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, are not receiving a consistent level of challenge in their work. As a result, their progress is not as rapid as it could be.

- In 2016, the achievement of disadvantaged pupils was below that of pupils nationally. As a result of leaders' more focused use of the pupil premium funding to support pupils' physical and emotional needs, the progress of disadvantaged pupils is improving. However, the attainment of disadvantaged pupils remains lower than that of pupils nationally. Leaders need to ensure that the academic needs of disadvantaged pupils are better met so that their outcomes continue to improve and move closer to pupils nationally.
- The progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities from their starting points is generally in line with that of other pupils. Their specific needs are identified and generally met through appropriate support.
- Leaders are addressing underachievement in many areas. Staff training and the introduction of new teaching approaches are beginning to have a positive impact on standards. School assessment information currently shows that pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 is improving. Overall, larger proportions of pupils across the school are now making expected progress. However, more time is needed for many of the new initiatives to impact on standards securely.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 109577 |
| Local authority | Luton |
| Inspection number | 10031415 |

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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| Type of school | Junior |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 7 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 359 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | David Dallinger |
| Interim Executive Headteacher | Justine Abbott |
| Telephone number | 01582 733764 |
| Website | www.foxdell.org.uk |
| Email address | head@foxdell.org.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 3– 4 June 2009 |

Information about this school

- Foxdell Junior School is much larger than the average-sized junior school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is well above the national average, as is the proportion of pupils whose first language is not English.
- The proportion of pupils who receive special educational needs support is in line with the national average, as is the proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs, or an education, health and care plan.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of key stage 2.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its

website.

- Foxdell Junior School will be formally federated with Foxdell Infant School from September 2017. The schools will share a single governing body and an executive headteacher.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in every class and attended an assembly. Several of the observations were carried out jointly with the interim executive headteacher and interim deputy headteacher.
- A wide range of pupils' workbooks were looked at by inspectors throughout the inspection.
- Meetings were held with the interim executive headteacher, the interim deputy headteacher, senior and middle leaders, the inclusion leader, a newly qualified teacher, the chair of the governing body and the improvement partner from the local authority.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils informally in class, and around the school at break and lunchtimes, to seek their views about the school.
- Inspectors met with several groups of pupils more formally to discuss many aspects of school life.
- Pupils in Year 3 and Year 6 read to inspectors. Inspectors talked to pupils about their reading habits and looked at their reading records.
- Inspectors scrutinised the school's website and a range of school documents including assessment information; minutes from the governing body meetings; the school's own evaluation; improvement plans; and records about behaviour, safeguarding children and attendance.
- Inspectors spoke to parents before, during and after school. Inspectors also took account of the school's own survey, which included the views of 191 parents.

Inspection team

| | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Fiona Webb, lead inspector | Her Majesty's Inspector |
| Jane Dooley | Ofsted Inspector |
| Teresa Skeggs | Ofsted Inspector |
| Susan Sutton | Ofsted Inspector |

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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