

Fox Hill Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107074
Local Authority	Sheffield
Inspection number	324520
Inspection dates	9–10 February 2009
Reporting inspector	Keith Bardon

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	271
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Mark Wilde
Headteacher	Mrs Nicola Shipman
Date of previous school inspection	6 December 2007
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Keats Road Sheffield South Yorkshire S6 1AZ
Telephone number	0114 2313469
Fax number	0114 2853661

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	9–10 February 2009
Inspection number	324520

© Crown copyright 2009

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

When Fox Hill Primary School was inspected in December 2007, it was given a Notice to Improve and asked to address issues related to pupils' achievement and standards. It was subsequently visited in July 2008, when it was judged to be making satisfactory progress. The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This medium size primary school serves a disadvantaged area on the outskirts of the city. Most pupils are White British and with very few exceptions speak English at home. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational need, are well above average. This includes 17 pupils who are taught in the school's Integrated Resource class. Early Years Foundation Stage provision is made up of a Nursery and a Reception class. Children from a wide area attend the Nursery, but over half move to other local schools at the end of the Nursery Year.

The school has achieved a number of awards including, International Dimension, Quality in Study Support and Activemark and is working towards the Healthy Schools and Leading Parent Partnership awards. A children's centre has recently opened on site providing a range of facilities for the local community. The children's centre did not form part of this inspection. The school also provides learning courses and study support for adults, children and families.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school no longer requires significant improvement. Under the focused and determined leadership of the executive headteacher the school has made satisfactory improvement since it was last inspected. Pupils are making better progress and an increasing number are attaining the expected standards for their age. Fox Hill is now a satisfactory school in all respects and is developing some good features. It offers satisfactory value for money.

Parents are supportive of the school and appreciative of the recent improvements. 'Children seem more settled' and 'very pleased with how they keep the children's interest' are typical of their views. Pupils are equally positive, describing the school as a place where 'people care about you'. Relationships are very positive, giving the school a pleasant, family atmosphere. Pupils' enjoyment of school is clear and the numbers who attend regularly and arrive punctually have been steadily rising in response to the school's rigorous initiatives. Behaviour is good and pupils work hard in class. They readily help each other and the staff in and around school. Pupils' appreciation of healthy living and how to keep themselves safe is satisfactory. Although they acquire good social skills, limited literacy and numeracy skills may prove a problem for some pupils in the future.

Since it was last inspected, the school has made many changes to address the deficits in pupils' learning and to accelerate their progress. These are proving successful and pupils' achievement is now satisfactory. While standards are below and in some cases well below average, they are moving upwards. Raising standards from the very low levels of the past is taking time, but pupils, particularly those in Year 2 and Year 6, are steadily closing the gaps in their knowledge and understanding. The work they have done in class and records of their achievements, show the current Year 6 to be the highest performing cohort the school has had for a long time.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and across the school as a whole, pupils make satisfactory progress. There are regular examples of well taught lessons, in which teachers use a clear structure and a straight forward approach to build pupils' understanding simply and securely. In contrast, there are lessons which are not as well organised and lack this clarity of purpose. As a result of these differences in quality, pupils' progress is inconsistent. When asked what could be improved, Year 6 pupils replied 'make it more exciting'. To some extent this response relates to an imbalance in provision. While the satisfactory curriculum provides pupils with interesting opportunities to learn, many activities focus on the acquisition of knowledge and lack opportunities for skills development. The benefits of skills based practical work can be seen in science, where an increase in investigative work has led to a marked improvement in standards. Close attention is paid to pupils' care and welfare and they receive good quality support and guidance. Staff in the Integrated Resource class match provision very carefully to the needs of the individual and as a result these pupils make good progress in their development.

Leaders and managers promote a strong unity of purpose and all staff are firmly committed to making Fox Hill a fully effective school. The school has had some difficulties in recruiting experienced staff, but additional help has been drawn in from different sources and deployed well to help the school to improve. Senior staff take on a wide range of responsibilities and it is much to their credit that the school has made satisfactory improvement since it was last inspected. The role of the subject leaders is generally underdeveloped. In a number of subjects, the monitoring of provision is minimal and planning for improvement too brief. The school is

closely involved with the local community and makes a good contribution to community cohesion. Governors have become far more involved in school management and governance is satisfactory.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

The provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall, with strengths in the secure routines that are in place, the warm relationships that are fostered and the way in which the curriculum encourages children's independence and confidence. Many children start Nursery with a narrow range of social skills, poor speech and little knowledge and understanding of the world around them. Despite making satisfactory progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, children's attainment at the end of Reception is often well below that expected. Nursery and Reception are organised well with good levels of adult support. There is a strong focus on speaking and listening and adults constantly engage children in meaningful conversation and discussion. Opportunities to extend speech and language through role play experiences and other talk based activities such as puppetry are not always fully optimised. In recent months, classrooms have been reorganised to good effect and several new systems have been introduced to aid teaching and learning. The impact of these developments has yet to be fully evaluated. Staff work together well, although some of the links between Nursery and Reception are underdeveloped. There is a secure system for recording ongoing observations of children to help teachers identify what needs to be learned next. The attractive profiles provide a good range of different types of evidence to record each child's achievements. The school now has more accurate data about each child's progress, though the use of this data to support learning is still at an early stage. Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are satisfactory and due attention is paid to children's welfare. Productive links with parents are fostered by providing home visits before children start Nursery.

What the school should do to improve further

- In order to increase achievement and raise standards, improve the quality of teaching and learning and ensure that pupils make consistently good progress as they move through the school.
- Increase the capacity of subject leaders to make a full and effective contribution to school management and improvement.
- Enhance the curriculum to enable pupils to acquire and develop a wide range of skills to complement their knowledge and understanding.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. For some time standards have been well below average but are beginning to rise as the school addresses the weaknesses that have held down pupils' attainment in the past. Across the school as a whole, pupils' progress is satisfactory. It is good in Years 2 and 6 where the teaching is at its most effective. The school has set challenging targets for the performance of Year 6 pupils this year. The quality of work these pupils are currently producing suggests it was right to do so and for the majority, standards are below rather than well below average. A high proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or

disabilities. The school provides sensitive support for these pupils and along with their peers, they make satisfactory progress. Traditionally girls have attained higher standards than boys. Motivating boys with work that stimulates their desire to learn is having the desired effect and the gap is beginning to narrow. Pupils educated in the Integrated Resource class receive intensive support and guidance from staff and often make good progress towards their personal targets.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The provision for pupils' personal development is good and a strength of the school. The vast majority of pupils enjoy coming to school and behave well. This is due to the clear and consistent policy to promote good behaviour, reinforced by prominent reminders of the school's expectations that are clearly visible around the school. Pupils value the range of rewards for good behaviour and strive to achieve them. Whilst pupils acknowledge that a small amount of bullying does occur they say they feel safe in school and know what to do if they feel threatened. They also recognise that bullying has been reduced dramatically. Attendance has risen steadily but is still a little below average. The provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, strengthened by thoughtful and reflective assemblies that reinforce the school's values. There is a good emphasis on teaching pupils about the diversity of other faiths and cultures, for example, when they explore the art, music and religions of India. The benefits of the programme for personal, social and health education are clearly evident in pupils' ability to express their views and feelings with growing confidence. Opportunities to promote safe practices through sex education and drugs awareness are rather limited. Preparation for future learning and life outside school is satisfactory overall. While most pupils acquire a good range of personal skills, weaknesses in literacy and numeracy may prove a hindrance for some.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

While the quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, some lessons are taught better than others which mean that pupils' progress is somewhat uneven. Since it was last inspected the school has implemented a number of strategies to increase the effectiveness of teaching and learning and to accelerate pupils' progress. These are having the desired effect, but how well they are used varies. At times teachers allow the strategies to dictate the structure of the lesson rather than using them as teaching aids. The most effective teaching builds pupils' learning cohesively, using a clear and straightforward, step-by-step approach. This gives pupils clear understanding and the confidence to put forward their thoughts and ideas in a sensible and constructive way. Relationships between teachers and pupils are very positive and behaviour is managed well. Teachers' use of assessment to match work to pupils' needs is satisfactory and notably better than at the time of the last inspection. A number of teachers are relatively inexperienced and are still learning how to link different elements of the lesson together so that pupils' learning builds progressively. Teaching in the Integrated Resource class is good and enables the pupils who attend to learn productively. Learning support staff work closely with class teachers providing valuable additional help and guidance for those who need it.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Although literacy and numeracy feature prominently, pupils enjoy a broad curriculum which adds much to their enjoyment of school. The curriculum has recently been restructured to make it more interesting, with better links between subjects. Pupils are given regular opportunities to extend their reading and writing skills by using them in different subjects. While these developments have increased the cohesion of the curriculum, planning does not take full account of the skills pupils need to develop in each subject as they progress through the school. This means that their learning is not yet well balanced. Pupils' personal development is at the heart of the curriculum; the introduction of the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning programme has done much to enhance self-esteem and promote good social behaviour. The curriculum is enriched satisfactorily with additional features, these include, after-school clubs, participation in local events, such as Sheffield Children's festival, a Book week and educational visits. The school benefits enormously from the involvement of specialist teaching in music and Spanish, which broadens the curriculum and enhances the quality of teaching. As a result, pupils make great strides in learning to speak another language and thoroughly enjoy their singing.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Fox Hill Primary School is a caring, fully inclusive school where pupils are encouraged to make full use of all it can offer. Pupils feel safe and trust the staff to help them when they need it. Safeguarding procedures are in place and meet current government requirements. The good standard of care for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities helps them to integrate fully into the daily life of the school. Pupils in the Integrated Resource class thrive under the care of the dedicated staff who work hard to ensure their needs are met well. There are good links with other agencies, giving ready access to a range of specialist support for those who need it. Rigorous measures to raise attendance have met with success and while there is room for further improvement the rate of absence has fallen and is continuing to do so. Systems for measuring and checking pupils' progress are well established and effective, helping to ensure that all pupils receive the right level of guidance and support. Most teachers set pupils clear targets, give good feedback in lessons and encourage them to evaluate their own progress. Good links with the local secondary school ease pupils smoothly into their next stage of education.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are clearly focused on raising standards. The school's performance is measured and checked regularly and senior staff and governors have a realistic view of the school's current performance. Since her appointment the executive headteacher, with the support of senior staff, has set about the task of increasing the school's effectiveness with a will. The school's most pressing needs are identified clearly and determined steps taken to address the weaknesses that have dogged the school in the past. Many well considered initiatives have been instigated and others revitalised, but the impact of these developments has yet to be fully realised. The school has made satisfactory improvement since it was last inspected and has satisfactory capacity to improve in the future. Links with the local family of schools and

professionals from various sources, including the local authority, are being utilised well to provide the additional help and expertise the school needs to further enhance teaching and learning and to raise standards. Because the school has had difficulty recruiting experienced staff, the management of some subjects has been minimal. Available expertise has been correctly targeted in the areas of most pressing need, but many subjects have lacked development. A more stable staff now provides the opportunity for this to be addressed. The school promotes community cohesion well. It is responsive to the needs of its own and the local community, providing a wide range of facilities which enhance the lives of both pupils and adults. Links with schools abroad and an opportunity to learn Spanish broaden pupils' horizons beyond the immediate community. Leaders and managers take considerable care to ensure all pupils have equal opportunities to learn and that there is no discrimination. Pupils from the Integrated Resource class, for example, join mainstream classes as soon as it becomes clear that this is where their needs will be best served. The work of the governing body has improved since the last inspection and is satisfactory. Governors have begun to ask the school challenging questions to check for themselves on how well it is doing.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	3
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	3

¹Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you very much for the very friendly greeting you gave the inspectors when we visited your school recently. Lots of you smiled and chatted to us which made us feel comfortable and welcome. We thoroughly enjoyed finding out about the work you do and special thanks go to those who talked with us about the school.

Fox Hill is a satisfactory school and better than it was a year ago when it was last inspected. It is a school that no longer requires significant improvement. Staff have worked hard to sort out the problems that were affecting the school previously and the improvements they have made are starting to show results. I could see from your work and from the records the school is keeping on your achievements, that your progress is quickening and this is very encouraging. There is still some way to go to make up for lost ground but I feel confident that the school will continue to improve in the future.

While your progress is mostly satisfactory, in some lessons you make good progress. This often depends on how well the lesson is organised and how clear the teacher makes the learning. This is something I have asked the school to look into, particularly how teachers can make sure that all of you make good progress all the time. You can help by always listening very carefully to what teachers are saying and if you are not sure that you understand or are unclear how you are going to achieve the lesson objectives, tell your teacher. I am sure they will be only too pleased to help.

All the inspectors were impressed by your good behaviour, how well you work and play together and your good attitudes. These are things you can be very proud of. Staff take good care of you and the school has a warm and friendly atmosphere. I know you appreciate all the help you are given. It is good that you take your targets seriously and know how to use them to help you improve.

You told us you find lessons interesting, but would like them to be a bit more exciting. I have asked the school to provide more opportunities for you to use practical skills in different subjects, much as you do in science investigations. For a number of reasons, some subjects have had more development than others and the school agrees with me that this is something that needs looking into.

Thank you once again for a very enjoyable two days and best wishes for the future.