

# Falcon Junior School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	120913
<b>Local Authority</b>	Norfolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	358878
<b>Inspection dates</b>	19–20 October 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Jill Bavin

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	297
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Ian Carman
<b>Headteacher</b>	Richard Boyce
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	28 November 2007
<b>School address</b>	Falcon Road West Norwich, Norfolk NR7 8NT
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 11 teachers and visited 19 lessons. Inspectors made five additional visits to classes to focus on marking and the progress made by pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and five other visits to classes to focus on cultural development. Additionally, the team met with members of the governing body, staff and pupils. They scrutinised a variety of documentation, including policies related to safeguarding, school development planning, monitoring and evaluation records, pupils' work in books and data about pupils' progress. Responses to questionnaires from staff, pupils and 69 parents were analysed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- How effectively is the school raising pupils' achievement in writing?
- How has the school developed the curriculum to promote pupils' learning about British cultural diversity?
- How has the school increased the challenge and accountability of staff since the previous inspection?

## Information about the school

The school is a little larger than the majority of schools in the primary phase, although the number of pupils on roll is falling. This reflects local demographic trends. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage and the proportion who speaks English as an additional language is much lower than the national average. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs, exceeds the national average. Most of these pupils have difficulties related to learning in key skills.

The school reorganised from a middle school to a junior school in September 2007. This means that the pupils currently in Year 6 are the first cohort to have joined the school in Year 3. A new headteacher joined the school in September 2008. At this time, a new senior leadership structure was established and a new Chair of the Governing Body appointed.

The school is currently working towards gaining national accreditation in recognition of its focus on information and communication technology.

**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

This is a satisfactory and improving school with a sound capacity for further improvement. Since the previous inspection, the school has developed a more interesting and relevant curriculum that contributes to pupils' enjoyment of school. This has also helped teachers to develop a wider range of teaching strategies. As a result, pupils have more opportunities than previously to use key skills in a variety of subjects. In spite of these improvements, the impact on pupils' achievement is at an early stage and the quality of teaching and the curriculum remain satisfactory. The rate of improvement and the effectiveness of curriculum development are constrained by inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. The level of challenge planned for pupils and the usefulness of marking varies. There are missed opportunities to share the features of the best literacy teaching and, in too many lessons, adults spend a disproportionate amount of time introducing the content and directing pupils. This limits time for independent work especially in relation to writing.

The headteacher, governing body and senior leadership team have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Strategic planning for school improvement is, therefore, based on sensible priorities. The headteacher has successfully led school development by deploying staff more strategically than previously to make greater use of their strengths. The governing body has become increasingly organised and knowledgeable about pupils' learning. It is, therefore, supporting and challenging the headteacher more effectively than previously. There are established systems to check individual pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics. These systems, combined with clearer identification of staff responsibilities, provide a basis for holding teachers and managers to greater account. The school now holds a wealth of information about how well pupils are doing, which is shared between senior leaders, other staff and governors. Middle managers have begun to check pupils' progress in the subjects for which they are responsible. Nevertheless, there remains some confusion about how to interpret some of the information, which is not always collated and analysed effectively. Consequently, the governing body and staff at all levels lack precise information about different groups of pupils.

Current standards are broadly average, although the weakest area is pupils' writing. Boys, girls, those who speak English as an additional language, and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make satisfactory progress given their starting points. Those pupils who left the school recently, made satisfactory progress and attained broadly average standards in English, but below average standards in writing and above average standards in mathematics and science.

Improvements to the curriculum, consistently good pastoral care and good links with parents and carers contribute to the many good aspects of pupils' personal development.

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Pupils' enjoyment of school is reflected in their above average attendance rates. They feel entirely secure in school and have a good understanding of how to make safe and healthy choices. Links with a wide range of communities beyond the school are limited.

Nonetheless, pupils are commendably accepting of the diversity represented within their school. One pupil told the lead inspector that 'difference on the outside doesn't matter because we are all the same inside'.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and improve pupils' progress in writing by:
  - increasing the consistency of helpful marking and suitably high levels of challenge for pupils
  - giving pupils more opportunities to write independently
  - sharing the features of the best literacy teaching in the school more systematically.
- Develop the role of the governing body and managers at all levels by providing them with the skills they need to analyse and use information about how well pupils are learning.
- Increase pupils' experience of a wider range of communities through direct links with other schools in the United Kingdom.
- About 40% of the school whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**3**

Pupils in Years 3 and 4 joined the school with broadly average standards in English, mathematics and science. They are making satisfactory progress and continue to work at the levels expected for their age. Mostly pupils concentrate well throughout lessons, although some pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, at times struggle to listen throughout quite long introductions. Good behaviour contributes to good learning when pupils are enthused by links between subjects, such as history and art following a visit to Norwich Cathedral. Pupils demonstrate a good ability to make links in their learning when they are actively and practically involved. For example, they made good use of science during the practical part of a lesson designing pneumatic models. While satisfactory, learning is not accelerated when teachers do not challenge all groups of pupils fully in all parts of the lesson. On rare occasions, pupils do not make enough progress because introductions contain too many unconnected elements. Learning is exceptionally strong when pupils are actively involved in solving mathematical problems and have excellent opportunities to explain their strategies.

While pupils welcome responsibilities that enable them to support the positive school ethos, they make a more limited contribution to communities beyond the local area. Pupils demonstrate their appreciation of non-material values, for example through responding to and writing their own poetry about the natural world. Older pupils demonstrate empathy in writing about children's experience of the Second World War. They are curious about the world around them, respectful of views that differ from their own, and have a good

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understanding for their age about different religions. They have a strong sense of right and wrong which they apply to environmental issues and to their relationships with each other.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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

<sup>1</sup> 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?**

In all lessons seen, relationships between staff and pupils were good. This strength underpins positive and effective behaviour management. Teachers have secure subject knowledge which enables them to introduce new ideas clearly. They make good use of technology to add interest for pupils. Planning routinely identifies modified tasks and/or levels of support for pupils of different abilities. These strengths are undermined when the pace of lessons, while satisfactory, is too slow to accelerate learning. The quality of marking varies widely in its usefulness in helping pupils to identify the next steps in their learning. Similarly, strategies to encourage pupils to extend their writing vary considerably from class to class. Teaching assistants are mostly deployed effectively, usually supporting pupils who are experiencing difficulties, although they do not always give pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities enough opportunity to work independently.

There is a good balance of artistic and sporting events in the curriculum. Reflecting the school's work to gain accreditation in this area, pupils make satisfactory use of computer technology for research to support their learning in a variety of subjects. They are enthusiastic about their PowerPoint presentations related to energy conservation. Work

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that enriches pupils' personal development is well established in the curriculum. Pupils spoke enthusiastically to inspectors about the recent 'food fest' event that had involved practical work to develop understanding of healthy foods linked to different religions.

Several of the positive comments from parents and carers commended the school's good level of pastoral care. Comments such as 'a genuinely caring atmosphere', 'my son has flourished' are representative of several views. The school can point to examples of individual pupils who overcome significantly difficult circumstances to make good gains socially and emotionally. This arises from the school's flexible response to meeting their needs, and close liaison with parents and carers and other professionals.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher gives the school a strong steer for improvement and senior colleagues and the governing body have embraced greater responsibility to provide increasingly effective support and challenge. It is too soon for the full impact of this to be seen in accelerated academic achievement for pupils. Middle managers recognise that, while they have begun to monitor progress and standards in their subjects, this work is at an early stage. The school uses its information about pupils' progress satisfactorily to promote equality of opportunity for pupils. The analysis of information to set challenging targets for different groups of pupils is at a very early stage of development.

At the time of the inspection, safeguarding procedures were good. The school adopts recommended good practice. Policies and practice are regularly reviewed, often taking account of the views of parents and pupils. Most significantly, staff successfully promote in pupils a good level of understanding of how to keep themselves safe.

Community cohesion is promoted satisfactorily. The school has an accurate understanding of its social context and has begun to evaluate what it is doing well and what needs to be developed. The school recognises its responsibility for preparing its mostly White British pupils for ethnic and cultural diversity. It successfully fosters positive attitudes and is now beginning to identify possible links with other schools and communities in the United Kingdom. The school maintains good links with parents and carers and involves them effectively in key school developments. These have included projects to improve pupils' behaviour in the recent past and more recent initiatives to ease pupils' transition into school in Year 3 and into secondary education.

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*These are the grades for leadership and management*

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

## Views of parents and carers

Fewer parents and carers returned questionnaires than is typical in most primary schools. A few had concerns related to communication with the school and how well it deals with unacceptable behaviour. A very few had concerns about their children's progress. The vast majority of parents and carers were happy with the school's work overall and there was unanimous appreciation of how well the school keeps pupils safe and helps them to be healthy. The inspection endorses parents' and carers' positive views. It found communication with parents and carers to be good, behaviour to be dealt with effectively and progress to be satisfactory.



## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Falcon Junior 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 69 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 297 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	33	48	33	48	3	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	38	55	31	45	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	26	38	38	55	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	19	28	44	64	2	3	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	30	43	36	52	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	21	30	43	62	1	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	29	42	38	55	0	0	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)	28	41	35	51	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	25	36	41	59	1	1	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	18	26	43	62	2	3	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	25	36	36	52	3	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	32	46	34	49	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	35	51	32	46	1	1	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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 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. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## 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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



21 October 2010

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Falcon Junior School, Norwich NR7 8NT**

Thank you for being so friendly and helpful when we visited your school before your half-term holiday. A special thank you goes to all those of you who met with us and shared your ideas and your work.

We found that your school is satisfactory which means it does some things well and is still working to improve other things. Some of the best things about your school include how much you enjoy being there. You attend school more regularly than many children of your age. This helps you to make the steady progress that is expected of you in English, mathematics and science. You behave well in lessons and around school. This contributes to everyone feeling safe, which is also helped by you learning how to make safe and healthy choices. You are interested in, and respectful of, people who hold different beliefs from yourself or who look different from yourself. This helps the school to be a happy and harmonious community. You know that staff care about you and are confident that you can turn to them for help.

The governing body, the headteacher and staff want to keep making your school even better. We have asked them to focus on helping you to become even better writers, by giving you more opportunities to write independently; by making sure that marking is always helpful, and that work is hard enough for you in all parts of the lesson. We have asked the governing body and all staff to make sure they understand all the information they hold about how well you are doing, so they can use it to help you even more. We have also asked them to give you more opportunities to learn about a variety of faiths and cultures through making links with schools in parts of the United Kingdom that are different from Sprowston.

You can help by continuing to attend and behave so well. Also, you can help by aiming high with your writing and telling teachers sensibly if you think you could meet even greater challenges. We wish you well in the future.

Yours sincerely

Jill Bavin

Lead inspector

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