

Falconhurst Primary School

High Trees, Chaffron Way, Eaglestone, Milton Keynes, MK6 5AX

Inspection dates 20–21 September 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		Requires improvement	3
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

- Teaching is not consistently good.
- Pupils do not attain high enough standards in reading and writing.
- Their progress in reading is not rapid enough.
- Assessment information is not used effectively to challenge underperformance and to ensure all pupils make good progress.
- The governing body does not challenge senior leaders sufficiently robustly about pupils' progress.
- Some middle leaders have still to fully develop their roles and make a full contribution to driving school improvement.
- The performance of all staff has yet to be rigorously monitored and evaluated.

The school has the following strengths

- The school's performance has improved considerably in the last 12 months.
- Outcomes in 2012, based on unvalidated data, suggest that attainment and achievement in Years 2 and 6 in reading, writing and mathematics are broadly in line with national expectations.
- There is some good and outstanding teaching on which the school can build.
- Nearly all pupils have a positive attitude to school and behave well in most lessons.
- There is a clear plan for the school's future development.
- There are good systems in place to ensure that pupils are kept safe.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 20 lessons, of which seven were joint observations with senior leaders. In addition, the inspection team made a number of other shorter visits to lessons.
- Meetings were held with members of the governing body, staff, groups of pupils and the local authority representative.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work and looked at a wide range of documentation, including the data the school has collected on pupils’ attainment and progress, procedures for keeping pupils safe and the school development plan. They heard some pupils in Years 2 and 6 read.
- Inspectors took account of the 11 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) to inform the inspection process.

Inspection team

David Wynford Jones, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Helen Bailey	Additional inspector
Desmond Dunne	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Falconhurst is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The majority of the pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils from other minority ethnic backgrounds is above average and has increased steadily over the last few years. The predominant groups are of African or Asian origin. There are smaller numbers from a range of other cultures.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well above the national average. A few are at the early stages of learning English.
- The proportion of pupils supported on school action is broadly average. However, the school has a complex needs department to support disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. Consequently, the proportion of pupils who are supported at school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for additional funding (pupil premium) is broadly similar to the national average for primary schools.
- The proportion joining or leaving the school part way through the school year is considerably higher than that found in most schools.
- In 2011, the school did not meet the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school is working with a partner school and the local authority to improve outcomes for pupils.
- A major building extension is currently being undertaken.
- Approximately a third of the teaching staff were new to the school at the start of this term.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards and accelerate pupils' progress in reading and writing by:
 - raising the expectations of what all pupils can achieve, especially the more-able
 - placing a greater emphasis on the teaching of the sounds letters make (phonics)
 - providing pupils with more opportunities to write at length and in different subjects in order to consolidate their skills
 - ensuring that marking consistently provides pupils with clear guidance to improve their work and that pupils are given the opportunity to respond.
- Ensure greater consistency in the quality of teaching by:
 - making certain that all lessons proceed at a quick pace and are matched to the needs and abilities of the different groups of pupils
 - providing more opportunities for teachers and teaching assistants to share and build on existing good practice
 - making more effective use of assessment data to challenge performance in order to ensure all pupils make good progress.
- Improve leadership in the school by:
 - making certain that the governing body develops its skills in holding senior leaders to account
 - developing the roles and responsibilities of middle leaders
 - implementing a rigorous process for monitoring and evaluating the performance of all staff.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Most children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with knowledge and skills below those expected for the age and make good progress. On entry to Year 1, most achieve at the levels expected of a five-year-old.
- The most recent teacher assessments and the July 2012 national tests outcomes indicate that attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 is broadly average. Pupils in the current Year 2 and Year 6 are on track to reach at least similar standards.
- Standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are much higher than those in 2011 when they were exceptionally low. In 2012, the school met the latest minimum standards set by the government for the percentage of pupils attaining Level 4+ in English and mathematics. The proportion of pupils making two levels progress (the expected progress) in Key Stage 2 by the end of Year 6 in 2012 was broadly similar to last year's national average. This is a marked improvement on the previous year when the government's minimum standards were not met.
- In Years 1–6, pupils' progress has accelerated in the last 12 months. This is because of improvements in the quality of teaching. Pupils make reasonable progress in mathematics but progress in reading and writing, particularly in Key Stage 1, is not as rapid as it should be. This is because pupils' skills and knowledge in the use of phonics is not sufficiently well developed. In most year groups, pupils do not get sufficient opportunities to write at length or to practise their writing skills in other subjects. Marking does not consistently provide pupils with clear guidance to improve their work or set sufficiently challenging targets for pupils to aspire to reach.
- Pupils known to be entitled to free school meals and those for whom additional funding is available, through pupil premium, reach slightly higher standards than their peers. However, more-able pupils, especially White British boys, are not always sufficiently challenged and they do not do as well as they should.
- The progress of most groups, including those with disabilities and with special educational needs, and those for whom English is an additional language, is broadly similar. Pupils assigned to the complex need department are fully integrated into the life of the school. They make progress similar to their peers.
- Pupils' understanding of other cultures, values and beliefs is developing well. They demonstrate a secure understanding of world faiths and talk confidently about local events.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- There is some good and outstanding teaching on which the school can build. However, too many lessons are not taught to this standard and require improvement. Strategies for teachers to share and build on good or better practice are not securely embedded in the school.
- All teachers plan their lessons appropriately. The learning intentions are identified and shared with the pupils. Satisfactory use is made of the electronic whiteboards to support learning.

- Where teaching is good or outstanding lessons proceed at a quick pace, pupils are fully involved and are clear about the measures for evaluating the outcomes of their work. The tasks are interesting and motivate the pupils. For example, in an outstanding English lesson in Year 6, pupils worked with sustained concentration, the teacher's expectations were high and pupils were given precise ongoing guidance to improve their work. Prudent reminders linked to basic punctuation, the use of paragraphs, adjectives and similes helped pupils to improve their work.
- In some lessons the pace is too slow and the teacher's expectations of what the pupils can achieve are too low. This is because assessment data have not been used effectively to set work that is closely matched to meet the needs of the different groups of pupils. Pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to contribute to their own learning. More-able pupils, particularly White British boys, are not challenged sufficiently. As a result, pupils do not make accelerated progress.
- Most teachers have secure subject knowledge but do not always take the opportunity to promote pupils' basic literacy skills and their understanding and use of phonics. Some teachers do not routinely reinforce basic writing skills in other subjects or encourage pupils to write at length.
- Marking has improved. Teachers mark the pupils' work regularly. There are some good examples of developmental marking, which provides pupils with clear guidance to improve their work and to strive to reach higher standards. However, this is not consistent throughout the school. Reminders about pupils' mathematical and writing targets are not evident in other subjects.
- Support staff generally support pupils with disabilities and/or special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language well, however, they are not always deployed to best effect, particularly at the start and the end of the lesson. At times, they are not sufficiently well briefed by the class teacher before the start of the lesson.
- Although still early days, the initial evidence suggests that the newly appointed teachers are bringing strengths to the quality of teaching.

The behaviour and safety of pupils requires improvement

- Pupils have a good understanding of keeping themselves safe. For example, they are fully aware of the potential dangers with the building work being undertaken to extend the school and when using computers to access the internet.
 - Most pupils behave well in lessons and around the school and are developing a much more positive attitude towards learning.
 - Pupils say behaviour has improved considerably over the last 12 months. They are generally courteous and polite to visitors and show respect and tolerance for each other.
 - Pupils are aware of different types of bullying, including: physical abuse, name-calling and cyber-bullying. They say that they are confident that should a rare incident occur it will be dealt with quickly and fairly by the staff. There has been one reported incident of racist behaviour since the last inspection. This was dealt with effectively by the school.
 - Occasionally pupils' behaviour slips, especially when lessons fail to capture their imagination and involve them fully in their learning.
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- Pupils' attendance continues to improve and is now broadly average. However, there is a small group who do not attend as regularly as they should. The school has recently introduced much more rigorous systems and strategies for monitoring and improving attendance. These have yet to be embedded into the work of the school.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Senior leaders work closely together. They share widely their vision for the development of the school and the opportunities the building extension will offer.
 - Middle leaders are enthusiastic but some have still to make a significant contribution to the development of the school and in the sharing of good practice.
 - Recently appointed middle leaders are clear about what they have to do to develop their respective roles.
 - Good induction procedures have ensured that new members of staff have quickly settled into the school. There is an enthusiasm and a commitment from all staff to improve outcomes for pupils and to further their own professional development.
 - School improvement priorities are based on a realistic evaluation of the school's performance. These are recorded in the detailed school development plan which sets out clear actions to bring about improvements.
 - Additional funding (pupil premium) to close the gap in pupils' performance is being allocated and monitored appropriately by the headteacher. The details and the impact of the additional resource have yet to be reported to the governing body.
 - Systems and paperwork to support the monitoring and evaluation of the performance of all members of staff are detailed. However, the process has still to be implemented rigorously and extended to include all members of the support staff.
 - Parents and carers are kept well informed and are increasingly becoming involved in their child's education.
 - The school fully meets the statutory requirements for safeguarding pupils and provides pupils with a good range of opportunities to learn how to stay safe.
 - Support from the local authority and the partner school is effective and has contributed to improvements in teaching and higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
 - Good systems and structures, coupled with the developing leadership team and recent improvements in teaching, provide the school with the capacity to improve further.
- **The governance of the school:**
- The governing body is supportive. There is a shared vision for the development of the school and the desire to see the school succeed. It is working closely with the local authority to raise pupils' attainment and to improve the school building.
 - There are appropriate systems and structures in place to oversee the work of the school. However the governing body does not consistently challenge senior leaders or evaluate the school's performance sufficiently critically against external measures.
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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 pupil's 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 pupil's 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	110355
Local authority	Milton Keynes
Inspection number	401117

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	355
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rachael Wearing
Headteacher	Rod Hudson
Date of previous school inspection	6 July 2010
Telephone number	01908 679354
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