

Falcon Junior School

Falcon Road West, Sprowston, Norwich, NR7 8NT

Inspection dates 4–5 December 2012

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The school has improved since the last inspection because leaders and managers have addressed the key areas identified for improvement.
- Teaching overall is good, with some that is outstanding, such as in Year 6. As a result all groups of pupils make good progress from the time they start in the school.
- Teaching assistants make a good contribution to the progress of the pupils they support.
- Support for pupils who need extra help or who have fallen behind is well organised and delivered, with the result that these pupils make good progress.
- Behaviour around the school and in classrooms is good and pupils enjoy their learning. Older pupils act as buddies to support Year 3 pupils, which is mutually beneficial.
- The school provides a caring nurturing atmosphere. Pupils say they feel safe and enjoy coming to school. Parents and carers support this view.
- The leadership and management of the school is good, with a strong team, including the governing body. All are clear about the school's strengths and areas for development. As a result there has been good improvement in teaching and pupils' achievement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- In a few lessons, teachers spend too long talking to pupils. This means that pupils do not have enough time to work independently and make good progress on tasks set.
- Pupils that can work faster than others are not always given the chance to do so.
- Teachers do not always tell pupils how long they have to complete tasks, which slows the pace at which they complete work.
- The current organisation of the teaching of letters and sounds does not benefit all pupils in Year 3.
- Progress in Year 3 is not as good as in other year groups.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 24 lessons or parts of lessons of which four were joint observations with the headteacher or assistant headteacher.
- Inspectors examined a range of documents, including the school’s data on pupils’ progress, planning, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and school improvement plans. They also sampled pupils’ work, listened to pupils read and met informally with parents.
- Meetings were held with pupils, senior and middle leaders and with a representative of the local authority. The lead inspector also held a telephone conversation with the Chair of the Governing Body.
- Inspectors took account of 24 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and 19 responses from members of staff through the inspection questionnaire. They received the views of pupils through both informal and pre-arranged discussions.

Inspection team

Joan Beale, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

John Mason

Additional Inspector

Piers Ranger

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Falcon Junior School is larger than the average-sized primary school and numbers are increasing.
- Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below that seen nationally.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is lower than average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The school is organised into a lower school with five mixed Year 3 and Year 4 classes, and an upper school with two Year 5 and two Year 6 classes.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching so that more pupils progress at fast rates by ensuring that:
 - teachers have high expectations of pupils' progress and set clear timings for activities
 - in every lesson, those pupils who are able to learn faster than others, are given the opportunity to do so and are given consistent challenge
 - teachers allow enough time for pupils to work independently so that they can make good progress in their learning.
- Improve the progress of pupils in Year 3 so that it is as good as that in other years by:
 - developing a more consistent approach to the teaching of letters and sounds to enable all pupils benefit from this
 - ensuring that all teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve when they join the school and set suitably challenging work.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils generally start Year 3 with attainment levels that are broadly in line with those seen nationally. They make good progress across the school and, as a result of this, their attainment at the end of Year 6 has historically been above that seen nationally.
- Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 dipped in 2012 to be in line with that seen nationally. However, this still represented good progress from these pupils' starting points. The school's internal tracking data shows that the current Year 6 and other year groups have made good progress since joining the school and are on track to meet demanding targets with similar levels of attainment to those seen in previous years.
- As a result of effective in-class support, individual and group support, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress. This also applies to the small number of pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language.
- Pupils show evident enjoyment of reading, and standards in reading at the end of Key Stage 2 are high. However, younger pupils do not always use the sounds that letters make to help them to read unknown words and this slows their progress.
- Pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium are sensitively supported in a variety of ways. As a result, they make good progress. Some pupil premium funding contributes towards extra teachers in English and mathematics, which has reduced group sizes, enabling pupils to access more support from their teacher. It has also been used to provide individual support for these pupils' social and emotional development needs, both within and outside the school day. Some money has been used to support pupils to access extra-curricular opportunities such as peripatetic music lessons, residential visits and clubs provided by outside agencies. As a result, the gap between pupils eligible for free school meals and those who are not is narrowing.
- Pupils' many achievements, including academic successes, are celebrated through a reward system of certificates, 'star' badges and other rewards, culminating in the sponsorship of a falcon. Pupils speak highly of this system and value it. The different coloured badges that pupils wear with pride identify their achievements to one another.

The quality of teaching is good

- Much teaching across the school is good with some that is outstanding, especially in Year 6. As a result pupils learn well and make good progress during their time in school.
- Teachers generally use a range of appropriate resources well to support learning and to challenge all learners. This includes information and communication technology resources and the interactive whiteboard. In an outstanding mathematics lesson in Year 6, there was excellent use of a program for counting squares in a polygon, which resulted in the full engagement of pupils and excellent attentiveness and eagerness to respond. In this lesson, the teacher also used a 'counting stick' very effectively to support pupils to count in multiples and fractions from a given point. The teacher's excellent questioning challenged pupils to predict and count backwards and provided a high level of challenge for more-able pupils.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and usually plan lessons that interest and enthuse pupils. They generally use the information they have about pupils' prior learning well to build on

this. However, sometimes more-able pupils do not progress as fast as they could because the work set for them is too easy.

- Teachers use a range of strategies to engage pupils and assess their understanding. For example, they ask pupils to talk to a partner and discuss their answers before showing these on a 'mini whiteboard'.
- The best lessons are characterised by energetic pace and clear time limitations. However, this is not always the case. In particular, in lessons which require improvement, teachers do not show that they expect pupils to make fast progress. As a result, some groups of pupils make slower progress than they could during lessons. In Year 3, teachers do not always set pupils work that is hard enough, given the above-average levels at which pupils are assessed as having attained at their previous school.
- Teaching assistants make a strong contribution to learning and are well deployed. This includes providing support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. These pupils also benefit from individual and small-group support outside of the classroom, as do pupils who are supported by pupil premium funding. As a result, these groups of pupils make good progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' positive attitudes to learning, and to school in general, help lessons to run smoothly and have contributed to the school's improvement. The atmosphere in school is polite and harmonious, reflecting the schools' values, which were redefined in work carried out during the recent anti-bullying week.
- No pupils have been excluded. Behaviour is good both in lessons and around the school. Pupils say that lessons are rarely disrupted by inappropriate behaviour. They mostly listen attentively to teachers, although a few lose concentration when asked to sit and listen for too long. Pupils of all ages answer questions and contribute to discussions readily.
- Pupils show good understanding of all forms of bullying and know that adults handle any instances of this very well. They are aware of potentially unsafe situations and speak knowledgeably about unsupervised use of the internet.
- Pupils are keen to take on responsibility. For example, Year 4 pupils act as buddies to newly arrived Year 3 pupils, helping them to settle in and also developing their own leadership skills through this. Year 3 pupils are very happy in school and speak highly of this system.
- Attendance has dipped since the last inspection, when it was above average, to below average. The school has introduced robust measures to address this.

The leadership and management are good

- The school has made good improvements since the last inspection, particularly in developing the quality of teaching and pupils' attainment. Leaders' accurate self-evaluation and action to rectify weaknesses show that the school has the capacity to continue this improvement.
 - Senior leaders and teachers in charge of subjects are well equipped to both monitor and drive
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improvement in their areas and all are passionate about improving the school further.

- All subjects are covered well and activities give pupils opportunities to take part in a wide range of trips and clubs which enhance learning. For example, a recent visit to Norwich Cathedral inspired pupils' writing. Music is a strength of the school, with all pupils in Year 3 having the opportunity to learn recorder and those in Year 4 the flute. High-quality physical education experiences are delivered through partnership with Norwich City Football Club. Pupils also benefit from specialist facilities for the teaching of art, and design and technology. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well promoted as a result of this broad range of experiences, and also through the strong emphasis of the school's very clearly expressed values.
 - The targets set for teachers are linked to improving both the quality of teaching and the progress that pupils make. Rigorous structures are in place to monitor these. Good support is provided where specific training needs are identified.
 - Parents and carers are positive about the school, saying that it is well led and managed and that their children are happy to come to school. This is also reflected in responses to the online questionnaire, parent view, with all responders saying they would recommend the school to others.
 - The local authority, having categorised the school as 'light touch' has provided appropriate support through an annual visit which helps the school to reflect on its self-evaluation and analysis of data.
 - Safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors monitor performance and provide a good level of support and challenge, which is an improvement since the previous inspection. Governors know what is happening in school. They are aware of the quality of teaching. They have a good understanding of data and know how well different groups of pupils are progressing and how well the school is performing in comparison to similar schools. Governors ensure that funds intended for specific purposes are allocated appropriately. For example, they know how, and for what purposes, pupil premium funding is spent. They check carefully that it is being used to help pupils make good progress in their learning and personal development. Governors have good awareness of the links between the performance of teachers and pupils, training for staff and their salaries. There are appropriate arrangements for the training of new governors.
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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 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	120913
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	405976

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	299
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ian Carman
Headteacher	Richard Boyce
Date of previous school inspection	19 October 2010
Telephone number	01603 441417
Fax number	N/A
Email address	office@falcon.norfolk.sch.uk

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