

Falconhurst School

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

Inspection dates 17–18 September 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Achievement is not good. Standards are below average in Year 6. Weaknesses in pupils' calculation and writing skills hold back their progress in Upper Key Stage 2.
- Pupils who join the school during Key Stage 2 attain less highly than their classmates. Assessment information is not used well enough to accelerate their progress.
- Pupils do not make fast enough progress in Key Stage 2. A smaller proportion of pupils than average reach the higher levels in Year 6.
- Teachers sometimes do not have high enough expectations of pupils, especially the most able.
- Marking is not used consistently well to support pupils' progress.
- Senior leaders' checks on teaching are not rigorous enough to identify staff training needs precisely and to enhance staff performance.
- Senior leaders do not always communicate their ambitions and goals forcefully enough to their colleagues to ensure teamwork is fully effective in driving improvement.
- The governing body is new and inexperienced, and is not yet in a position to hold leaders fully to account for the school's performance.

The school has the following strengths

- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage achieve well. Resources are used well to stimulate children's interest in learning.
- Recently appointed teachers have had a significant impact on improving pupils' achievement in Years 1 to 4 where standards are now average.
- Pupils' behaviour has improved and is now good. Most pupils have positive attitudes to learning.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Leaders have worked effectively to raise attendance and to improve pupils' punctuality.
- Themes in subjects taught and enrichment programmes underpin pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in all year groups from Reception to Year 6 through visits of varying length to classrooms to check on pupils’ learning. All teachers were seen teaching. On a few visits, they were accompanied by two senior leaders.
- A very small number of Nursery children started school on the second day of the inspection.
- A range of pupils were heard reading.
- Samples of Key Stage 2 pupils’ work in writing and mathematics were looked at.
- Meetings were held with school staff, a group of pupils, two members of the governing body, and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 35 questionnaires completed by staff. Too few responses have been made by parents to the Ofsted online questionnaire in the last year for them to be recorded on the Parent View website. An inspector spoke informally to a few parents at the beginning of the school day.
- Inspectors checked a range of evidence including: monitoring records; consultants’ reports; the school improvement plan; the school’s own data on pupils’ attainment and progress; and policies, procedures and practice relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

Derek Aitken, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Peter McEntee	Additional Inspector
Carol Worthington	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Just over 40% of pupils are from White British backgrounds and 20% are of Black African heritage. The remaining pupils come from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds. There are some pupils, mainly in the younger age groups, at an early stage of learning to speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium, which is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after, is broadly average.
- Many more pupils than is commonly the case join or leave the school before the end of Year 6.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with statements of education, health and care plans or with statements of special educational needs is also average. Currently, two pupils have such statements.
- A new Chair of the Governing Body took up post in September 2014. A new Vice-Chair also took up post in September 2014.
- In 2013, the school met the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- A breakfast club operates on the school site. It is managed by the governing body and was included in this inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make teaching consistently good or better, and increase the proportion of pupils achieving at the higher levels by ensuring that all teachers:
 - have high expectations for pupils' workrate in lessons
 - step in regularly to assess pupils' learning when they are working on their own and move them on quickly to the next task
 - always provide the most-able pupils with work that makes them think hard and learn as quickly as they can
 - use marking well to support pupils' progress.
- Raise achievement in Key Stage 2, especially in Year 6, by ensuring that:
 - all pupils develop their calculation skills securely
 - weaknesses in pupils' use of punctuation and spelling are tackled effectively
 - assessment information is used purposefully to raise the attainment of pupils who join the school during Key Stage 2.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, including governance, by ensuring that:
 - senior leaders check the quality of teaching more rigorously to identify training needs and to improve staff's performance
 - senior leaders communicate their ambitions and goals more forcefully to their colleagues to enhance teamwork
 - governors develop their knowledge of the school and skills to enable them to hold senior leaders fully to account for the school's performance.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management

require improvement

- Actions which have been taken by the headteacher and deputy headteacher to raise achievement are not yet fully effective in enabling rapid improvements to be made in all areas of the school's work.
- Senior leaders introduced an improved tracking system last year but do not make consistently good use of the information it provides on pupils' progress to set sharp, realistic goals for pupils and to direct teaching.
- The school is in the early stages of working towards full implementation of its preferred approach to assessment following removal of National Curriculum levels.
- Senior leaders assess the impact of support programmes, for example for disadvantaged pupils, in some detail. However, their checks on the progress of pupils who join the school late are not robust enough to enable them to step in quickly to tackle any underperformance and to reduce gaps in attainment between these pupils and their classmates.
- Senior leaders' evaluations of the overall quality of teaching across the school are over-generous. Consequently, targets for raising the performance of individual staff are not rigorous enough to enable leaders to assess closely the types of training which would benefit staff.
- In-school staff questionnaires and other inspection evidence show that senior leaders do not always communicate their goals and ambitions successfully across the school to enable staff to do their jobs to best advantage.
- Staff with allocated responsibilities for key subjects show the capacity to drive improvement and some, in their very new roles as key stage leaders, are increasing their accountability for pupils' achievement.
- Good new appointments have been made to the teaching staff. This is helping to improve pupils' achievement.
- The school ensures that there is no discrimination and promotes equal opportunities adequately. The school provides a sensory room for statemented pupils and new arrivals who find it difficult to settle. Pupil premium funding has mainly been used effectively, for example to provide extra support for reading and phonics (the sounds letters make) for identified pupils in Year 1, and to enable more pupils to use the breakfast club.
- The school's curriculum (the subjects taught) is broad and balanced. Themes are explored which foster pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. In lessons, some topics enable pupils to express empathy and to consider ethical dilemmas. Year 5 pupils were seen to do this as they expressed their viewpoints on a white lion and whether they saw its future in the wild or as a circus attraction. Other pupils have learnt sign language to enable them to communicate with pupils with hearing impairments.
- These lessons are supplemented by enrichment activities inside and outside the local area which deepen effectively pupils' understanding of life in modern Britain. Theme weeks have enhanced pupils' knowledge of diversity and acceptance of differences, for example through studying the work of inspirational black leaders. Visits from the travelling Tuba Group have acquainted pupils with unusual instruments and music from different cultures.
- National sports funding has been spent appropriately. These monies have been used, for example, to employ recently a specialist teacher for physical education with the priority of improving skills in the younger age groups, but the impact of this work has not yet been measured closely.
- The local authority provides the school with useful support and helpful advice, for example through its regular checks of data on pupils' performance, joint lesson observations and scrutinies of pupils' work.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors rightly recognise that they require further training to improve their effectiveness as many new governors, including the Chair and Vice-Chair, have taken up post within the last year.
 - Governors are aware of pupils' previous underperformance in Year 6. They have a broad awareness of the subjects which staff have to work on to raise standards in Key Stage 2 and the impact of monies spent through additional funding on eligible pupils' achievement.
 - They do not yet have a clear overview of the quality of teaching across the school and have not yet been closely involved in managing staff performance, including the work of the headteacher.
 - Key governors have taken useful steps to help them get to know the school better. For example, they have recently conducted a detailed survey of staff's views to guide their work on improving the school.
 - Governors make sure that current government requirements for safeguarding are met.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good and contributes usefully to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Secure relationships established in the Early Years Foundation Stage are built upon effectively in the older age groups. Pupils manage their behaviour well in public areas, although sometimes a very few pupils in the younger age groups need guidance from adults to tone down their boisterousness at play.
- Pupils make good use of the school's large playgrounds, varied facilities and attractive equipment to take vigorous physical activity at break- and lunchtimes or to converse happily and quietly with their friends.
- Most pupils enjoy learning and collaborate usefully with each other when given the opportunity in paired talk and group-work routines. In lessons, they are usually keen to respond, and put their hands up quickly when asked questions. On a few occasions, they appear unmotivated at first or are reluctant to answer, but when they do so, what they say is mainly correct and well thought out.
- Pupils of different ethnic origins, including new arrivals, mix easily with each other. Pupils greet visitors in a friendly, polite way and are keen to share information about their school and their relationships. They report that bullying is uncommon and that staff deal well with any incidents. School records confirm that there were only one bullying and one racist incident last year. There have been very few exclusions.
- Attendance rose sharply for all groups of pupils last year. Tighter procedures for checking and promoting attendance, including a popular reward scheme which pupils value, have contributed much to this improvement. Almost one quarter of pupils attend the breakfast club which has supported the school's successful drive to improve punctuality.
- Inspectors agree with parents that the school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Suitable procedures are in place for monitoring visitors. The playground area is securely fenced.
- The logs leaders keep on pupils' conduct show that incidents of misbehaviour are clearly recorded and suitably followed up, although patterns of behaviour are not analysed for pupils or groups. Pupils say they feel safe in school and know to whom they can turn if they have any concerns.
- Leaders ensure that Nursery and Reception children who are at an early stage of learning to speak English as an additional language receive the specialist support that they need to help them to progress quickly and to feel settled in school.
- Leaders, usefully supported by the work of the learning mentors ensure that disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs receive the required support for their pastoral needs, either directly in school or through the involvement of outside agencies.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Previous weaknesses in teaching meant that a large number of pupils did not develop their command of literacy and numeracy skills, especially in Key Stage 2, securely. Consequently, pupils' achievement has not been good. Currently, pupils' achievement is improving because of better teaching.
- The tasks which teachers set for the most-able pupils do not always motivate them to think hard and to make rapid progress. This was observed, for example, in a mathematics lesson in Year 6, and is also evident in the standards of work in pupils' books in Years 4 to 6.
- Teachers usually provide pupils with work that they enjoy, but pupils do not consistently make fast progress. Sometimes, this is because pupils spend time at the beginning of lessons working through examples of what many already know and can do. When lessons do get off to a brisk start, teachers sometimes do not review the work pupils do on their own effectively or in a timely way to ensure pupils sustain their motivation. On these occasions, pupils are not always able to show whether they understand new learning and whether they are ready to move on to another task.
- Disabled pupils and those pupils with special educational needs sometimes do well in lessons. However, teachers and teaching assistants do not always share information about their attainment effectively enough to accelerate their progress.
- Marking is variable in quantity and quality. Teachers do not always ensure pupils follow up their advice and a few pieces of work from last year are unmarked.
- There is clear evidence that teaching is improving steadily across the school, although it is presently most effective in raising pupils' attainment in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Years 1 to 4. Suitable action has been taken to eliminate weak teaching and good recent appointments have been made. In most lessons, as for example in Key Stage 1, teachers use interesting resources to stimulate pupils' thoughts and ideas, and guide pupils' learning well. Questioning skills have improved since the previous inspection.

- The majority of the teaching makes for lively learning and capitalises on the good relationships that exist in lessons and which reflect pupils' positive attitudes. For example, good learning was observed in a Year 4 lesson where the teacher used new technology expertly to challenge pupils to accumulate a wide range of descriptive adjectives to create an interesting 'cliff-hanger' for their stories.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Attainment at the end of Year 6 in 2013 was below average and most groups of pupils underachieved in reading and writing. However, provisional results for Year 6 pupils in 2014 show improvements at the nationally expected Level 4 and most pupils made the progress expected of them over Key Stage 2.
- In 2013, a wide gap in attainment emerged between disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 and their classmates. Disadvantaged pupils were working about one year below their peers in reading, writing and mathematics, and about one and a half years behind all pupils nationally in reading and writing.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make similar progress to that of their classmates. Data are not shared consistently well across staff to ensure their good progress.
- The most-able pupils do not do as well as they should do in Key Stage 2. Too few pupils achieve the higher levels by the end of Year 6. This is mainly because teachers' expectations for their performance are not high enough and these pupils do not receive consistently good feedback through teachers' marking to inspire them to aim higher.
- Although pupils in the current Year 6 classes broadly made the progress expected of them last year, their attainment is below average. This reflects the high proportion of pupils with additional needs in this year group but it is also the result of previously weak teaching.
- Weaknesses in Year 6 pupils' mathematical skills have not been tackled quickly enough. Consequently, less-able pupils often make simple mistakes with calculations, for example subtractions, when asked to write them down or to work them out mentally. The most-able pupils practise methods which they should have already mastered. Year 5 pupils are more confident than those in Year 6 in using calculation methods, and some are able to use different methods to check their answers (by using inversion) and to apply their knowledge correctly in solving simple problems.
- The quality and quantity of pupils' writing is variable in Years 5 and 6 with girls' work generally being better than that of boys. Year 6 pupils' writing shows inconsistent use of punctuation and misspellings of common words.
- While there are, currently, no significant gaps overall in achievement between different ethnic groups and between disadvantaged pupils and their classmates across the school, pupils of all groups who join the school in Key Stage 2 attain less well than their classmates by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils' attainment when they join Year 1 has risen in recent years and is now slightly below average. Results in the Year 1 screening check for phonics were slightly below the national average in 2013. Provisional results for 2014 show that Year 1 pupils have exceeded the 2013 standard.
- Attainment is broadly average by the end of Year 2. Year 2 pupils, including the less able, read accurately and fluently because early reading skills are taught well. This has provided pupils with a more secure base for their work in Key Stage 2, and Year 4 pupils' attainment in writing is currently a little above average.
- Staffing improvements have reversed the decline in achievement. Most pupils, including those in Key Stage 2, are now making the progress expected of them, although this upturn is not yet fully reflected in standards in Years 5 and 6.

The early years provision

is good

- The school's records show that the levels of children's skills and aptitude when they join Nursery are below those expected for their age. All groups across Nursery and Reception make good progress, especially in their personal and social development. The percentage of children who reached a good level of development increased in 2014 and exceeded the 2013 national average.
- Children thrive because they are enthused by, and make good use of, the stimulating and well-organised resources. Children quickly develop an enjoyment of learning and rarely find themselves with nothing to do. There is a busy hum of activity in both the indoor and outdoor areas.
- Reception children develop qualities, such as concentration and perseverance, well. They take considerable care with activities designed to improve their handling or fine motor skills, such as painting. However, at this early stage in the school year, limitations in early language skills mean that

some children find it difficult to describe in any detail what they have drawn or to explain the purpose of their learning.

- Children feel safe because the large, attractive outdoor area is secure and affords them ample space to work and to play collaboratively on their self-chosen activities. Children show their independence as they quickly decide what to do without needing direction from staff. They work well together, for example in the wet play area, discussing their findings agreeably with each other as they fill their containers. Other children work contentedly on their own.
- The warm relationships children form with staff is a further strength and promotes good learning. Children trust adults fully and respond quickly to their instructions and promptings. Several children confidently initiate conversations with adults during their enjoyable activities. However, teaching assistants sometimes miss opportunities to reinforce and extend pupils' learning as their questioning occasionally lacks focus.
- Children understand simple hygiene rules and use the handwash dispensers regularly before mealtimes. They understand the importance of keeping other children safe in crowded areas by forming orderly queues.
- Staff have clear, well-understood procedures for assessing children's work. Staff are making increasingly effective use of the tracking system introduced last year to identify children who need extra help to catch up with their classmates through small group-work, and to direct teaching.
- The experienced and well-informed leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage analyses strengths and areas for development very capably and has made good use of training opportunities to develop staff's expertise and to improve provision.

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	110355
Local authority	Milton Keynes
Inspection number	442474

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	372
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Will Swann
Headteacher	Rod Hudson
Date of previous school inspection	20 September 2012
Telephone number	01908 679354
Fax number	01908 608838
Email address	office@fcsch.co.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

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.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)
[Store St](#)
[Manchester](#)
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2014

