

Falconer's Hill Academy

Ashby Road, Daventry, Northamptonshire NN11 0QF

Inspection dates

16–17 May 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The school is a welcoming and inclusive environment where pupils are reminded daily about their mission of 'flying high'. Pupils are determined to do their best and are proud of their school.
- Leaders and governors are ambitious and determined that the school continues to improve. Leaders pride themselves on providing a high-quality education for all pupils.
- The governing body is highly skilled. They use school information well to challenge leaders to ensure that the school's work is accurate and effective.
- Leaders have effective plans in place to improve the school further. They have prioritised these improvements well in robust action plans. They check and evaluate the progress of their actions regularly.
- Teachers plan and deliver lessons that meet the pupils' needs so that they make good progress in all subjects.
- The school provides for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education very well. Pupils know that they are well supported by adults to meet the challenges of learning.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress because they are supported well by teachers and teaching assistants.
- Leaders effectively support vulnerable pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. They work closely with the learning mentor who is knowledgeable and knows how to support pupils well so that they reach their full potential.
- Teachers do not always have the highest expectations of pupils. They do not insist pupils use the correct spelling, grammar and punctuation in all subjects. Consequently, pupils make repeated errors in their work.
- Teachers do not always demand from pupils the highest standard of presentation in their workbooks.
- Subject leaders' action plans do not have appropriate timescales or milestones so that they are accountable for the actions taken to raise pupils' achievement.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those pupils eligible for free school meals do not attend school as often as they should.
- Leaders improve outcomes for pupils, ensuring that pupils' attainment and progress in reading and mathematics meets national expectations by the end of key stage 2.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve subject leaders' action plans by including appropriate timescales and milestones in order to hold leaders to account for improving outcomes for pupils.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring that:
 - teachers' expectations for pupils' grammar, spelling and punctuation are consistently high across all subjects
 - pupils' presentation is of a high standard.
- Improve the quality of personal development, welfare and behaviour by ensuring that pupils' attendance improves, particularly that of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those pupils eligible for free school meals.
- Improve outcomes for pupils by ensuring that pupils' attainment and progress in reading and mathematics meet national expectations by the end of key stage 2.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders and governors are ambitious for the school. Since their appointment, the headteacher and associate headteacher have worked effectively to improve the school. They are capable and committed leaders who are determined to improve all aspects of school life so that outcomes for all pupils rapidly improve.
- Leaders have placed a high priority on ensuring that pupils are reflective and thoughtful learners. They have firmly established a school-wide vision to develop pupils' positive attitudes to learning through 'flying high' in all aspects of school life. Leaders know that this is a crucial aspect to support pupils to become effective learners and to develop their personal and social skills.
- Subject leaders are capable at leading their subject areas. They share the same drive for improvement as the senior leaders and know what needs to be done to raise pupils' achievement. They monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning effectively and provide appropriate support to teachers to improve standards.
- Leaders have established a performance management system that meets the needs of all staff through robust and ambitious targets. They give highly effective training to staff to develop their skills and expertise. For example, the newly qualified teacher spoke highly of senior leaders who have effectively supported her to develop her skills and expertise.
- Leaders ensure that the pupil premium funding is used effectively. They have recently commissioned a review and responded to the advice to ensure that the provision for disadvantaged pupils is effective. The governing body monitors how leaders use the funding and align this with the progress of all disadvantaged pupils.
- The additional government funding for sport is used well to increase pupils' participation and enjoyment of sport. For example, a lunchtime sports coach is used effectively to engage pupils in a wide range of sports. Participation rates are high and after-school clubs are well attended. Pupils are proud of their sporting achievements and look forward to participating in the local winter and summer season tournaments.
- The additional funding for special educational needs and/or disabilities is used effectively. Leaders identify pupils' needs and effectively put support in place. There are positive links with external agencies so that specific needs can be met. In addition, there is a smooth transfer of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities from the infant school and for those pupils moving up to the secondary school. Leaders and the learning mentor have ensured that every source of support is being used to support vulnerable pupils who do not attend school regularly.
- The curriculum inspires pupils to learn. Pupils explained that because lessons are interesting, they pay close attention and they want to learn more. They said that teachers know how to 'spice up' the lessons to make them fun. Trips and visits complement the broad curriculum. For example, as part of the Year 5 science topic on Earth and Space, pupils visited the National Space Centre. Year 4 pupils have enjoyed visits from historians to teach them about life in Roman times. As a result of a well-planned curriculum, pupils are keen to be in school and they want to learn.

- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is strong. This is reflected in the curriculum, where pupils are asked to be reflective and thoughtful about a range of topics. For example, pupils' work on personal, social and health education asks them to consider their own strengths and set themselves new goals. They are challenged to understand the views of others, for example how someone might feel if they are left out of a game. Pupils' workbooks show that they respond thoughtfully to these important themes, which are reflected in their positive attitudes to learning.
- Teachers prepare pupils well for life in modern Britain. Pupils told inspectors that they respect all religions and know about tolerance. Leaders and staff ensure that they promote fundamental British values through the curriculum. For example, in one Year 6 class, there were lively discussions about the forthcoming elections. The teacher skilfully supported pupils with their understanding of democracy.
- Subject leaders' action plans do not clearly show appropriate timescales or milestones so they can be held accountable for their actions to raise pupils' achievement.

Governance of the school

- The multi-academy trust provides effective support to the school. The academy improvement leader regularly visits the school to check the impact of leaders' work on raising standards. Action plans are monitored and reviewed regularly. The trust has organised a range of training opportunities, to ensure that leaders' and teachers' skills are developed in line with the school improvement plan.
- The governing body are highly effective. They are a capable and astute team who have high aspirations for the pupils and staff.
- They have a clear idea of the strengths and areas for further development. They regularly meet with leaders and subject leaders, so that they fully understand the work of the school. Records of governors' meetings show that they use their knowledge to challenge leaders to hold them to account for the impact of their work.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. All staff have received thorough training and know their responsibilities well, so that they can report any concerns that they may have.
- Pupils are knowledgeable about how to keep safe online and in the local community. There are frequent reminders. In lessons, pupils are well supported by staff to understand the importance of keeping safe.
- Leaders and the learning mentor work closely with families of pupils who are vulnerable or at risk. The leaders and the learning mentor meet with parents regularly to support the ongoing needs of pupils. Information and actions recorded at meetings are well documented so that the needs of vulnerable pupils are monitored carefully. Leaders and staff work closely with other professionals and external agencies, including the staff at alternative provision, to ensure that the needs of pupils are met well.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching is good, with many strengths. Teachers plan lessons effectively, ensuring that they build on pupils' knowledge and skills. They make sure that the needs of different groups are met by adjusting learning tasks.
- Teachers use their questioning skills well to probe pupils' understanding and to make them think more deeply about their learning. For example, in mathematics lessons, teachers skilfully supported pupils to justify their answers to problems based on fractions. Consequently, teachers are able to plan subsequent lessons to extend pupils' knowledge and skills further.
- Disadvantaged pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, make good progress because they receive effective support from teachers and teaching assistants. This ensures that they make the progress of which they are capable. Teachers and teaching assistants ensure that they develop disadvantaged pupils' independent learning skills and, where needed, they also provide pupils with individual support.
- Classrooms are purposeful environments where pupils know what is expected of them. For example, teachers have made a check list so that pupils know what they have to do to improve their work in every lesson. Teachers give frequent reminders in class about positive attitudes to learning and the skills needed for effective partner work. Consequently, pupils are able to develop their skills to be independent and engaged learners.
- Tailored provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities ensures that these pupils make good progress in lessons. All staff, including the learning mentor, provide a package of support for those pupils who have behaviour needs. The Rainbow Room is a quiet space where pupils who have behaviour and emotional needs can work in small groups. The learning mentor is highly skilled at supporting pupils with specific needs.
- Mathematics has rightly been identified as an area for improvement and teachers have received appropriate training to improve the teaching of mathematics. They plan lessons carefully to ensure that pupils are securing strong number skills as well as developing problem-solving and reasoning skills. Mathematics lessons centre on partner work and skilful teaching of mathematical concepts. Teachers plan and build on pupils' mathematical knowledge well. For example, pupils in Year 3 were adding fractions, while pupils in Year 6 were multiplying fractions. Consequently, pupils' workbooks show that pupils are making good progress in mathematics because they have opportunities to build on their knowledge and skills.
- Phonics is taught well and enables pupils to acquire the key skills needed to read effectively. Pupils' progress is checked regularly and further personalised support is provided for those pupils who need additional help.
- Teachers promote the love of reading through extensive class book reviews. This activity helps pupils to think deeply about the author's reasons for using particular words and phrases. Teachers are able to build on pupils' skills of inference and deduction. Lower-attaining pupils and the most able pupils read regularly and some receive additional support from an adult where needed. Consequently, pupils make good progress in reading.

- Pupils are given opportunities to write for a range of purposes. Teachers help pupils to think carefully about the structure of texts. They show pupils how to use story ideas in their own writing through changing the characters and setting. Pupils are confident writers because they understand the features of different texts. Teachers check pupils' progress regularly through a range of writing activities that result in published work.
- Pupils' workbooks show that teachers do not always demand a high standard of presentation of pupils' work. Teachers miss the valuable opportunity to give sufficient guidance to pupils on how to improve grammar, spelling and punctuation skills in their topic work. Consequently, pupils make repeated errors in their written work.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Leaders place a high priority on pupils' personal development and welfare.
- Pupils are confident learners because they know what is expected of them. They value the 'flying high' vision to support them to achieve their best. They know what skills they need to become confident and proficient learners. These are checked regularly by teachers. Pupils are rewarded every term with fun events of their choosing for showing positive attitudes to learning and good conduct.
- Pupils reported that there is little bullying or name-calling from their classmates. On the rare occasions they do occur, they know that any member of staff will deal with the issues fairly and quickly. Teachers support pupils well, so that they are safe online and in the community. For example, pupils' workbooks show that pupils have considered how to keep safe online and how to communicate safely using email. As part of healthy eating, pupils have also learned about how certain foods can affect the body, such as chocolate, tea and coffee.
- Those pupils who attend alternative provision have their needs met well and staff regularly talk with teachers to ensure that information about pupils' progress is shared. The alternative provision supports pupils to develop their personal and social skills through a range of activities. Consequently, pupils are more settled in school and are able to learn more effectively, using the skills they have learned at the alternative provision.
- Leaders have established a breakfast club which is well attended by pupils, including vulnerable pupils. Pupils who spoke with inspectors said that they liked the opportunity to start the school day sharing breakfast with their school friends. The breakfast club is led daily by the learning mentor who uses the time effectively to welcome pupils and prepare them for the school day.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Attendance is improving and is now broadly average. Attendance of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those eligible for free school meals is slightly below average. Leaders have been quick to tighten up the school's procedures

to encourage regular attendance and to use external support to help pupils back into school. Leaders make the need for high attendance clear through school displays, weekly newsletters and the school website. Attendance has a high priority and is part of the 'flying high' vision for pupils to have positive attitudes to school.

- Around school, pupils are very polite and courteous to visitors as well as each other and to staff. Pupils are very caring and considerate of the needs of others. This is clearly seen in the classroom where pupils work well together and support each other.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- In 2015, the progress made by pupils at the end of key stage 2 in reading and mathematics was below the national average. However, progress in writing was broadly average. The most recently published information in 2016 shows that the progress made by pupils at the end of key stage 2 was broadly average in reading and significantly above average in writing. Progress in mathematics was significantly below the national average. Despite a legacy of underachievement, pupils' current workbooks show that they are making at least good progress in mathematics and writing, including the most able pupils.
- Current workbooks show that progress in mathematics is improving and all pupils are making good progress. The revised approach to the teaching of mathematics is having a significant impact on pupils' knowledge and understanding. Their reasoning and problem-solving skills are being developed more fully.
- In 2015, attainment for all pupils in reading and mathematics was below the national average, whereas attainment in writing was broadly average. In 2016, attainment in reading was below the national average and in mathematics it was significantly below the national average. Pupils' attainment in writing in 2016 was above the national average.
- In 2015, the progress made by disadvantaged pupils at the end of key stage 2 in reading and mathematics was below the national average. Progress in writing was broadly average. At the end of 2016, disadvantaged pupils were below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils' current workbooks show that disadvantaged pupils are making good progress. The pupil premium funding is being used effectively to raise the achievement of this group.
- Teachers plan the work for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities effectively. Teaching assistants, who are led well by teachers, provide effective support so that these pupils make good progress.
- The most able pupils are provided with a range of opportunities to extend their knowledge and understanding through well-planned activities. Consequently, they make good progress.

School details

Unique reference number	140829
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10020983

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	213
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stuart Burns
Headteacher	Matthew Reetz
Telephone number	01327 703132
Website	www.falconershillacademy.com
Email address	office@falconershillacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The academy was established in April 2014. It is sponsor-led by the David Ross Education Trust.
- The majority of new staff were appointed by the new headteacher.
- The current headteacher was appointed in September 2014.
- There is one newly qualified teacher.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is significantly above the national average.

- A small proportion of pupils attend part-time alternative provision.
- The proportions of pupils who are from minority ethnic backgrounds and speak English as an additional language are below the national averages.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average.
- The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 21 lessons and visited all classrooms. Eight lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and associate headteacher. Inspectors met with the leaders for English, mathematics and special educational needs and/or disabilities. Inspectors held meetings with two governors from the local governing body and the academy trust improvement leader.
- Inspectors held meetings with the learning mentor and telephoned the providers of the alternative provision for pupils.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of the school's documentation, including the school's evaluation of its own performance and development plan, information on pupils' attainment and progress, behaviour, bullying and attendance records, safeguarding procedures, and reviews of the pupil premium funding and the primary physical education and sport funding. Reports from trust reviews were also scrutinised.
- Inspectors observed behaviour around the school, including at breaktimes and lunchtimes. They spoke formally to one group of pupils and informally with others around the school. One inspector listened to pupils reading.
- The 19 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, were considered. Inspectors spoke with parents before school and considered the 12 responses from parents to the Ofsted free-text service.

Inspection team

Emma Nuttall, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Elizabeth Mace

Ofsted Inspector

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