

# Falconhurst School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	110355
<b>Local Authority</b>	Milton Keynes
<b>Inspection number</b>	288643
<b>Inspection dates</b>	18–19 June 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Pritiben Patel

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>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	357
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr S Suchy
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr R Hudson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	26 March 2001
<b>School address</b>	High Trees Chaffron Way Eaglestone Milton Keynes MK6 5AX
<b>Telephone number</b>	01908 679354
<b>Fax number</b>	01908 608838

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Falconhurst is a large primary school. The majority of pupils are of White British origin and others are from Black, Asian or other backgrounds. The percentage of pupils whose first language is believed to be other than English is significantly above average, and 26 pupils are at the early stages of learning English. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is significantly above average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities including those with a statement of special educational need is average. The school has a Moderate Learning Difficulties Department. The school has been awarded, Effective Early Learning Quality Assurance status and the Healthy Schools Bronze Award. Pupil mobility is high. There has been significant staff turnover in recent years due to professional reasons.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Falconhurst is a satisfactory and improving school with good features. The majority of parents are happy with the school, and hold it in high regard. For example, a parent commented, 'My child comes home happy, I would recommend Falconhurst every time'.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and deputy provide strong leadership for the school. They have addressed staff turnover successfully and their impact on behaviour, attendance, assessment and tracking systems and teaching and learning, all of which are improving pupils' achievement, has been positive. There is a clear commitment to improve at all levels and consequently support from the local authority has been embraced by all staff.

Children enter the school with skills that are well below those usually expected. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage due to good provision. Teaching is strong, so that children attain standards that are just below average by the time they start Year 1. They make satisfactory progress through the rest of the school so that standards remain below average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. The school is successfully working hard to raise standards.

Personal development is good due to the high priority it is given. Pupils' behaviour, their understanding of safe practices and their adoption of healthy lifestyles, particularly through extra-curricular activities, are good. They make a good contribution to the school community. Their preparation for economic well-being is satisfactory as demonstrated by their satisfactory progress in basic skills.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Good aspects include relationships between teachers and pupils and the use of the interactive whiteboard to engage pupils. However, there is not enough good teaching at present to raise pupils' achievement. The use of assessment data to plan work has improved, but is not used consistently by all teachers. Consequently, more able pupils are not always sufficiently challenged. The pace of some lessons is slow and, as a result, pupils lose interest. Inconsistencies in marking mean that not all pupils are clear about their next steps for improvement.

The curriculum is satisfactory. A range of extra-curricular opportunities for pupils, including visits, ensures good enjoyment.

Care, guidance and support provided for pupils are satisfactory, and pastoral care and support are strengths. Effective help is provided for pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities, those new to English and those in the Moderate Learning Department (MLD), allowing them to make satisfactory progress. Good links have been established with other schools and external agencies, to help meet pupils' individual needs.

Governors visit lessons, contribute to the school's self evaluation and make a good contribution to the school's development. Capacity to make further improvement is good as demonstrated by an improvement in pupils' achievement, behaviour, attendance and assessment and tracking systems.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in English, mathematics and science.
- Improve teaching and learning by increasing pace and using assessment data consistently, particularly for the more able.
- Improve teachers' marking so that pupils are clear about the next steps for improvement.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Standards are below average. The school's recent tracking data demonstrates that pupils are now making satisfactory progress. Pupils who have been at the school throughout a key stage are beginning to make good progress in some areas. Until last year, pupils made better progress in mathematics and science than they did in English. Evidence seen during the inspection indicates that the progress being made in English has improved.

Pupils enter the school with knowledge and skills well below those usually expected. By the end of Year 2 standards are below average. Their standards in mathematics are slightly better than in English. By the end of Year 6, pupils' standards remain below average. Results have improved over the last three years. Standards are higher in science than in English and mathematics.

Boys attain less well than girls. The school is taking appropriate action to address this by purchasing appropriate resources for boys, and encouraging male role models to take part in school activities. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and those new to English make satisfactory progress in line with their peers.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, helped by lively and thoughtful assemblies and a strong sense of good behaviour. Pupils are courteous, polite, and form good relationships with their teachers and each other. Their attendance is satisfactory. Pupils show good enjoyment in their education; they particularly like the opportunities of physical education. They feel safe in school, and know that any concerns that they have will be addressed. Pupils maintain healthy lifestyles through a range of physical activities and some healthy eating choices. Pupils of different ethnic groups work and play together harmoniously. Pupils make a good contribution to the school community through the School Council, and Year 6 pupils staff the reception at lunchtime.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

The school's monitoring programme led by senior staff has had a positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning. Lessons observed in the Foundation Stage and in Year 6 were outstanding. The focus on teaching and learning is beginning to impact on pupils' achievement, which is now satisfactory and improving. Good features of lessons included involvement of pupils. Questioning challenged pupils to think for themselves and not to rely on the teacher to tell them the answer. Where teaching was satisfactory, it was competent but uninspiring. Pupils were content to follow the teacher's instructions and not encouraged to explore ideas for themselves. Teachers have secure subject knowledge, make good use of resources and use teaching assistants well to support learning. However, the pace is sometimes slow and more

able pupils are not always sufficiently challenged, due to inconsistencies in the use of assessment data by teachers. Relationships are good, creating a positive atmosphere for learning to take place.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

The school offers a subject based curriculum with some opportunities to enhance pupils' learning by linking work in different subjects, but many more are missed. The school is beginning to use pupils' first hand experiences to make learning meaningful, but does not do this sufficiently. Themed weeks such as Food Week, Multicultural Story Week and a good range of music provision enhance pupils' enjoyment. There is a range of extra-curricular clubs such as French, art and gym, as well as a range of trips and residential visits which develop pupils' confidence. Standards in writing are improving as pupils are provided with purposeful writing contexts. Information and communication technology (ICT) skills are taught effectively in specific lessons as well as across the curriculum. However, the school is further developing provision so that pupils have more opportunities to practise their ICT skills in different subjects. A range of intervention programmes ensure that pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities and those new to English make satisfactory progress. Pupils' development of basic skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT are satisfactory.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

The quality of care, guidance and support is satisfactory and pastoral support is a strength. All staff show a high level of commitment to meeting pupils' needs and support for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and those new to English is good. Procedures for identifying vulnerable children at an early stage, and giving them the support they need, are good. Health and safety procedures are clear so that pupils' welfare is promoted well. The appropriate arrangements for child protection and safety are in place. The MLD department provides a good range of supportive activities for those pupils experiencing difficulties with their learning or confidence, so they are effectively integrated into the school. Academic guidance and support are satisfactory. There are inconsistencies in practice, for example in planning work for individuals' needs and in the quality of marking. Consequently work sometimes lacks challenge, and not all pupils understand how they can improve.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good. Leaders have worked hard and successfully to improve pupils' achievements in recent years. Their improved monitoring of teaching and learning along with better assessment and tracking systems have raised achievement, so that it is now satisfactory. These much improved assessment and tracking systems have ensured that teachers have greater accountability over the progress their pupils make. Subject leaders for literacy and numeracy play an active role in the development of the school. They monitor teaching, learning and standards through work scrutiny and interviews with pupils. They are beginning to model lessons and coach colleagues in order to share good practice. Leadership and management at all levels work well together and share the same vision. The school recognises that there is still work to be done on teachers' use of assessment data, standards and teachers'

marking. The school's self-evaluation is good as challenging targets are now beginning to be set, based on an overview of pupils' progress.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	3

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

29 June 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Falconhurst School, Milton Keynes, MK6 5AX

On behalf of the inspectors I would like to thank you very much for being helpful when we came to visit your school. We really enjoyed meeting you, talking to you and looking at all your work.

You go to a satisfactory and improving school with good features. These are the main things we found:

- you behave well, enjoy school and have good relationships with each other and your teachers
- you make satisfactory progress in English and mathematics because teaching is satisfactory in the main, although some lessons are good in your school
- all of the adults in your school make sure that you are safe, happy and well looked after
- the headteacher, governors and staff work hard on your behalf.

We believe that there are some things that can be improved in your school. We believe that you should all get higher standards in English, mathematics and science. Some of your lessons should have a fast pace so that you enjoy your learning even more. Some of your teachers should use your assessment information more carefully, to plan lessons and give some of you more challenging work, of which you are capable! Finally, some teachers need to tell you clearly through their marking, the steps you need to take to improve your work.

With best wishes for your future success,

Pritiben Patel Lead inspector