

Falconbrook Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101006
Local Authority	Wandsworth
Inspection number	307560
Inspection dates	19–20 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Selwyn Ward

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 on roll	
School	329
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs T Strickland
Headteacher	Mrs L Phillips
Date of previous school inspection	24 November 2003
School address	Wye Street Battersea London SW11 2LX
Telephone number	020 7228 7706
Fax number	020 7228 0803

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Falconbrook Primary is a larger than average school. Pupils come from a wide range of different ethnic backgrounds. The largest groups are Black British of African and Caribbean origin. Two thirds of the pupils are learning English as an additional language and a relatively high number of pupils join the school partway through their primary education. An above average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, mainly for speech and language and for behaviour problems. Falconbrook is a Children's Fund School, reflecting the high level of needs within the community that the school serves. Staff turnover has been high. There is a breakfast and after-school club.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Falconbrook provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. The headteacher, school leaders and governors have had particular success in creating a happy and welcoming environment where pupils from all backgrounds grow in confidence and self-esteem. Pupils' personal development is good because they are very well looked after. Carefully tailored support helps those with emotional and behaviour problems, as well as those who join the school partway through their primary education, sometimes with little English. As a result of this support, and a stimulating curriculum that engages pupils' interest throughout the school from Foundation Stage to the end of Year 6, the school turns out mature and sensible young people who are keen to do well.

Where the school has had less sustained success is in translating this provision into good academic achievement. Standards have fluctuated over the years. Although they were higher in 2007, standards are currently low. This nevertheless represents satisfactory achievement in relation to pupils' very low starting points. Pupils' progress in their key literacy and numeracy skills prepares them satisfactorily for the next stage of their education.

School leaders have a generally accurate view of how well the school is doing and have put in place a series of initiatives to secure improvements that show the school's sound capacity to improve. The impact of these has been hampered, however, by the many changes of staff. This has meant that, even where there has been a rise in standards, as there was last year in mathematics, this has not been maintained.

Teachers know and get on well with their pupils. They manage their classes well, and this is a major factor in the good behaviour achieved, even among some of those pupils who have had difficulty in controlling their behaviour. Teachers assess pupils' work on regularly and acquire useful information about their progress. Despite this, however, work is too often not matched sufficiently to the wide range of abilities within each class. For the pupils with learning difficulties and those learning English as an additional language, this is less of a problem because they benefit from help from teaching assistants. It is more able pupils who do not always make the progress they should because they are not set challenging enough work. Teachers mostly set out clearly for the pupils what it is they are expected to learn. The involvement of pupils in assessing their own learning is at an early stage, however. Marking varies widely in quality. Some teachers set out very clearly for pupils the next steps that they need to take in their learning, linking this well to the personal targets that they have on their tables or in their books. Other marking merely confirms that the teacher has seen the work. Pupils are not all aware of their targets. These inconsistencies mean care, guidance and support are satisfactory rather than good, despite the very strong pastoral care.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children start school with skills and capabilities that are generally very low in relation to their ages. In addition to learning guided by adults, they benefit from a very varied curriculum that gives them a huge choice of different activities within a series of interconnected rooms covering each of the Foundation Stage areas of learning. As a result, these enthusiastic and inquisitive children make good progress, particularly in their social and physical development. Standards, however, remain well below average by the end of the Reception Year, especially in mathematical

development and writing. The sheer amount of choice available to the children in their exceptionally well-resourced Foundation Stage areas makes it difficult for staff to keep a close track on the exact activities every child chooses each day. They keep records of children's progress over time, but opportunities are missed for involving the children themselves in helping to record their various different activities and to begin to think more about what they are learning. When asked, the children are certainly eager to explain!

What the school should do to improve further

- Match work better to pupils' different capabilities so that more able pupils, in particular, are set consistently challenging work.
- Involve pupils more in assessing for themselves the progress that they are making and ensure that marking gives them all a clear understanding of what they need to do to improve their work.

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 in the 2007 national tests rose to below average, boosted by a significant improvement in standards across the school last year in mathematics. At the time of the inspection, results of the 2008 national tests were not available to inspectors but the school's own assessments show standards to be low. The rise in standards in mathematics has not been sustained. This is in part due to changes within the leadership team. In some classes, pupils' progress has been uneven because of the changes of teacher. Although pupils' standards are close to a year behind those expected nationally, this still represents satisfactory achievement in relation to their very low starting points, and taking account of the number of children who join Falconbrook with their education interrupted through changes of school and, sometimes, country. Pupils with learning difficulties, including those with delayed speech and language, make similar progress to the others because they benefit from good support. The same is true for those who are learning English as a second language. More able pupils, however, do not always make as much progress as they should because too often they are not set challenging enough work.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils certainly enjoy and feel safe at school. The vast majority behave well. They respond quickly to teachers' instructions and are attentive in class so that no time is wasted when switching between activities. A small number of pupils present challenging behaviour at times, but they are catered for well through support in the Sunshine and the Starlight rooms. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils gain valuable insights into different faiths and cultures and show respect for the views and backgrounds of others. They also show good care for others through their fundraising. 'We think about ways of raising money for charities, for example, a sponsored silence for children in Africa', explained a member of the school council. Pupils are also very pleased about the outcomes of an art competition and are rightly proud of the generous business donation that this raised to further refurbish the library. Pupils show good awareness of the importance of diet and an active lifestyle. They really enjoy the games and extra-curricular clubs in which many take part. As a pupil explained

with eminent clarity, 'You can do more stuff if you are fit and healthy'. Attendance is average, with pupils keen to see their class earn points in the school's rather complicated 'air miles' for attendance scheme. Punctuality, however, remains a persistent problem because a number of parents bring their children to school late.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Work is not consistently pitched at the right level for all pupils. This is particularly the case for more able pupils who are not set challenging enough tasks. Too often they are simply given more of the same work as others. Orderly classroom routines are well established and relationships between pupils and staff and among the pupils themselves are very positive. Pupils enjoy opportunities to talk about their learning in pairs but there are some missed opportunities to actively involve pupils in their learning, for example by assessing their own and each other's work. On occasion, pupils have to sit for too long listening to the teacher. Where this occurs, they are sometimes less engaged and the pace of learning slows. Pupils who find literacy and numeracy difficult are well supported within lessons by teaching assistants.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school's good curriculum contributes to pupils' positive attitudes to learning. It is enriched through French in Years 3 to 6 and a weekly lesson in children's philosophy, which incorporates elements of literacy and personal and social education. There are good opportunities to develop musical skills through singing, steel pans, percussion and clarinet lessons. As a result, the quality of some of the music, including the singing, is of a high standard. Pupils are enthusiastic to take part in sporting activities and this develops their positive attitudes to keeping fit and healthy. Pupils enjoy visits to local places of interest, such as a drama workshop run by a local arts centre for pupils in Year 6. Through themed days, pupils are encouraged to develop their creative skills. For example, during the recent arts day pupils experimented with different methods of printing to make pictures. There is a very good range of popular lunchtime, before- and after-school clubs, including book club, chess, street-dancing, and various sports.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Staff work hard to ensure that all pupils are fully included in the life of the school, with additional facilities provided to help new arrivals to settle in. Pupils benefit from very good pastoral care which contributes particularly well to their personal development. The school draws well on support from outside agencies to give extra help when needed. Attendance is carefully monitored with good attendance suitably rewarded and persistent absentees and latecomers followed up appropriately. Behaviour management is very well organised and consistent across the school. As a result, there have been notable improvements in the behaviour of some pupils. Child protection procedures meet statutory requirements, although not all staff have been recently trained. Health and safety risk assessments are organised appropriately. Pupils' progress in English and mathematics is assessed termly but not all marking gives pupils sufficient guidance on how they can improve. While some pupils are very clear about their individual targets and what they need to do next, others are not.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher provides good leadership and has steered the school through a difficult period of high staff turnover. However, the many staff changes, including within the leadership team, have limited the impact of measures taken to raise standards. School leaders' monitoring identifies priorities for development but not all managers are involved in evaluating the quality and consistency of teaching and learning to secure swift improvements. Systems are in place to check how well pupils are making progress. However, information from assessments is not used consistently throughout the school to ensure that all pupils are suitably challenged in their work so that they all make the progress of which they are capable. Governors are very committed to the school and take an active part in helping it to improve. They share the headteacher's and senior leaders' vision for Falconbrook as an inclusive school where all are valued but they have not challenged the school enough on achievement and standards. Leaders, staff and governors have together secured very good resources to support pupils' learning and enjoyment of school.

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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	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

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

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

¹ 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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
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	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

30 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Falconbrook Primary School, London, SW11 2LX

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to visit your school. The school is giving you a satisfactory education. Children get off to a good start in the Nursery and Reception Years but we would like to see you making faster progress in Years 1 to 6 and attain higher standards in English, mathematics and science.

Your headteacher and staff have been particularly successful in making Falconbrook a happy school where you are looked after well. We were pleased to see how well behaved you are and how you get on so well with each other. You enjoy your lessons and are keen to do well. You especially enjoy the many interesting extra things you do at school, including the philosophy lessons that are helping you to become more confident speakers. It is certainly working - some of you are so chatty that you will find it very hard to raise money for African through the 'sponsored silence'!

We have asked teachers to help you to make faster progress by making sure that you are all set work that stretches you. We have also asked them to give you more feedback in their marking so that you all know what you need to do to improve your work. We would like to see you involved more in assessing your own and each other's work so you can tell your teachers how well you are learning. You can also help by making sure that you know your targets and doing your very best to achieve them.

Yours sincerely,

Selwyn Ward

Lead Inspector