

Falcon Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120913
Local Authority	NORFOLK LA
Inspection number	313789
Inspection dates	28–29 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Roger Sadler

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	341
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Trevor Hardingham
Headteacher	Mr Tony Waller
Date of previous school inspection	16 May 2005
School address	Falcon Road West Sprowston Norfolk NR7 8NT
Telephone number	01603 441417
Fax number	01603 441468

Age group	7–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

From September 2007 the school no longer has Year 7 pupils on its roll, but began to admit pupils into Year 3. Almost all pupils are White British. Pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds, but a below-average proportion is eligible for free school meals. More pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities than is typical nationally.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The quality of education provided by the school, leadership and management and pupils' achievement and progress are satisfactory. The vast majority of parents and pupils hold the school in high regard and one parent reflected the views of many when she wrote, 'I have found the staff to be helpful, friendly and approachable.' Pupils' personal development and well-being is good and the school places strong emphasis on developing these aspects. Pastoral care and support are strong and effective. Expectations of pupils' personal conduct are high. Consequently, almost all pupils behave well, enjoy school, relate well to each other and are polite and considerate.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Classroom management and relationships are good. Teachers use interactive whiteboards well to add impact and interest to lessons. Mathematics is effectively taught throughout the school, which has worked successfully to raise standards in this subject where they are currently above average. Care guidance and support are good. The school regularly assesses and carefully analyses each pupil's progress and directs extra help to those who are not achieving their full potential. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress because teachers make careful assessment of their needs and ensure that teaching assistants give effective support.

The main reason that achievement is satisfactory rather than good is because in too many classes not enough is expected of pupils' writing. Although most pupils attain in line with the standards expected for their ages, few exceed this level. In some classes, pupils' books contain too much poorly presented and unfinished work that goes unchecked by teachers' marking. Teachers miss chances to improve pupils' basic written skills in subjects other than English. Although the school's targets in English provide satisfactory challenge, those in mathematics give much higher levels of challenge. Pupils in some classes show good understanding of their learning targets, but in other classes they lack a clear understanding of where and how to improve their work, especially their writing.

Pupils appreciate the good range of interesting visits and visitors used to enhance the school's curriculum. The school is working effectively to make learning more interesting for pupils. Sound monitoring and evaluation at all levels, including by governors and subject leaders provide the school with a clear understanding of where improvements are needed. Checks to ensure that policies are consistently implemented are sometimes insufficiently demanding and this results in inconsistencies, for example, in the effectiveness with which pupils' work is marked. The recent success in raising standards in mathematics and its clear and accurate understanding of where improvements are needed indicate that the school has satisfactory capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the accuracy of pupils' writing, including the use of grammar, punctuation, spelling and their presentation of written work.
- Develop pupils' basic written skills in all subjects.
- Consistently implement all key policies, especially for the marking of pupils' work.
- Ensure that all pupils know their learning targets and how to improve to reach them.

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

Pupils' attainment on entry varies yearly, but is usually in line with what is typically found nationally. Achievement and progress are satisfactory overall. The school's assessments, Year 6 national test results in 2007 and pupils' current work indicate that most pupils are attaining nationally expected standards. Pupils achieve best in mathematics, in which standards have improved well over the last two years and are now above average. Pupils achieve well in the subject because of good teaching, ambitious academic targets and teachers' high expectations. Standards in English declined to broadly average in 2007 when too few pupils attained Level 5 in the subject. Standards in science are average. Year 3 pupils have made good progress this term because teaching is consistently good. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress in line with that of other pupils, throughout the school because they receive appropriate additional support that meets their needs.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good. They respect others and accept differences between people, but the school is aware that their first-hand knowledge of the multi-cultural nature of British society is no more than satisfactory. Pupils enjoy the school's welcoming atmosphere and the good range of extra-curricular activities. Their enjoyment of school is reflected in their regular attendance. They show good understanding of how to lead a healthy life. Pupils participate fully in making decisions about school life and value their school council as an effective way of influencing change. They take full advantage of the opportunities the school provides for taking responsibility, for example, running the tuck shop with its healthy products at break times. They adopt safe practices and feel safe in school. They know that they can always talk to an adult if they have a problem. Pupils make valuable contributions to the community by raising funds for charities. Their positive attitudes and satisfactory achievement give them a sound preparation for the next stage of education and for their future lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In all classes teachers establish good relationships with pupils, most of whom are keen to take part and enjoy learning. Behaviour is managed well. Where teaching is consistently good, as it is in Year 3 classes, carefully planned lessons delivered at a brisk pace ensure that all pupils learn at a good rate. Pupils in these classes know exactly what is expected of them and work hard. In other year groups, expectations are not always high enough for pupils to make good progress because they are not challenged sufficiently and poorly presented work is accepted. Teaching assistants give effective support to pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in small groups. Support in whole-class sessions is less effective. Pupils are encouraged to evaluate their own learning in most lessons but this

practice is not fully consistent. Teachers' marking does not always provide sufficient challenge or guidance on how pupils can improve particular aspects of their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

There is a very good variety of enjoyable extra-curricular activities, such as sport, orchestra and choir to promote pupils' social development. The school has concentrated on improving its curriculum, especially provision for mathematics in which standards have improved significantly. Appropriately, the focus is now on literacy. Information and communication technology is used well in other subjects, but opportunities are often missed to develop writing skills in subjects other than English. The curriculum is suitably modified to meet the needs of most pupils but, on a few occasions, more able pupils lack opportunities to write accurately and at length. Older pupils enjoy learning French and younger pupils enjoy other language-awareness lessons. A strong feature of the curriculum is the personal, social and health education programme that is successful in developing pupils' good understanding of safe and healthy living. Some classrooms are small for the size of classes using them, and the shape makes activities in small groups difficult to organise.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides a highly supportive, caring and safe learning environment, which is much appreciated by pupils and parents. Procedures for safeguarding pupils are strong. Support and guidance for those with learning difficulties are satisfactory. Many pupils know their mathematics targets that guide them where and how to improve their work. Because pupils in some classes show little understanding of how to improve their writing, plans are in place for a revised system for giving them writing targets from January onwards. The school regularly and accurately assesses and carefully monitors the progress of each child and allocates additional resources, often involving teaching assistants, when possible underachievement is identified. All teachers show a clear understanding of which pupils require special attention and use this knowledge skilfully when organising teaching groups and extra programmes.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leaders and managers have been successful in ensuring that pupils' personal development and relationships are good throughout the school and that the school provides a secure, happy and caring environment. The senior management team, subject leaders and governors share a common understanding of which aspects of the school are most in need of improvement because they evaluate performance accurately. Monitoring and evaluation of performance were used well to improve achievement in mathematics and resulted in rising standards. Leaders are less successful in ensuring all staff hold consistently high expectations of pupils' writing and staff do not teach writing consistently well. Consequently, written standards, although satisfactory, require improvement. Teachers are not always sufficiently challenged by managers to improve aspects of their work. As a result, the marking of work is often not helpful enough to enable pupils to improve. Governors understand their role and recognise they need to challenge managers more in order to raise achievement above current satisfactory levels.

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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?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ 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

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	2
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?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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	3
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 November 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Falcon Junior School, Sprowston NR7 8NT

Thank you all for making us welcome when we inspected your school, especially thanks to those who talked to us about school life. We enjoyed our visit.

We found your school is a happy place where people get on well with each other and treat each other politely and with respect. You make satisfactory progress in your work. You are getting on well enough in science and English and doing well in mathematics. Some of you could present your writing more carefully and improve your grammar, spelling and punctuation.

You behave well in lessons and clearly enjoy school. We are pleased you feel safe in school and know that adults look after you well. We were impressed with how you choose healthy food and take plenty of exercise. Many of you take on lots of responsibilities, for example as school councillors and running the healthy-tuck shop. You think of others' well-being when you raise funds and join in community activities.

Most of you and your parents regard your school highly and very much appreciate the clubs and visits that are provided. We could see that you enjoy school life and you attend regularly, so well done! Staff know your learning needs well and provide extra help to those of you who are not doing your best. Your headteacher and the staff are working to improve the school and know that there are some things that need to be changed. We have recommended that they should:

- help you to improve your writing and the way you present your work;
- help you to practise and develop your writing skills when you write in all subjects;
- make sure that marking is always helpful to you;
- be sure that each one of you knows the targets you are set in each subject and how you can achieve them.

Yours sincerely

Roger Sadler

Lead inspector