

Falconhurst School

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

Inspection dates

21–22 September 2016

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
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- This is a good school where pupils make good progress. This is because their needs are accurately identified and teachers work hard to make sure lessons meet those needs.
- Disadvantaged pupils, the most able disadvantaged, the most able and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities receive well-targeted support and the progress they make is improving quickly.
- The school is exceptionally well led by the headteacher. She is determined to give every pupil the best possible opportunities for success.
- The headteacher has developed a strong senior leadership team who share her ambition and vision for the school.
- The governing body is effective and committed to working with the school to ensure continuous improvement. They offer a good level of support and challenge.
- Teachers plan lessons carefully to make them relevant and exciting. As a result, teaching, learning and assessment are good.
- Teaching is not routinely challenging enough for the most able pupils. This means that sometimes pupils could make even better progress.
- Pupils enjoy their learning and talk passionately about doing their best. They are not afraid to make mistakes and take every opportunity to learn from them.
- Children in the Nursery and Reception classes receive a good start to school because the rich environment and good standards of care support them to make good progress.
- Pupils are proud of their school and enjoy working together. The school is a safe place to be and pupils are cared for well.
- Most parents are positive about the way that the school is led. However, leaders do not ensure that parents are as involved in their children's learning as they could be. This means that opportunities for families to support pupils' aspirations and progress are not used as well as they could be.
- Pupils are not encouraged to read as much as they could. This means that their progress in reading is not as rapid as that seen in writing and mathematics.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teaching is challenging all pupils, particularly the most able, so that it helps them to make faster progress in their learning, especially in reading.
- Develop stronger relationships with families and the local community to further raise pupils' aspirations and support their progress.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The school is led by an inspirational headteacher. Since her arrival a year ago, she has determinedly tackled weaknesses in the school. Her excellent understanding of what is going well at the school and where improvements are needed has helped to ensure that teaching is improving rapidly. In turn, this means that pupils are now making much stronger progress. The headteacher understands the context of her school exceptionally well, and takes care to get to know pupils and their families. Her vision for the future of the school has helped to bring about a collective drive to ensure that pupils benefit from an outstanding provision as soon as possible.
- The headteacher has quickly gained the confidence of her staff and governors. They rightly recognise and celebrate the rapidity of the improvements that have been made. All members of the school community are proud to be a part of the team that continues to move the school forward.
- The headteacher recognises talented staff and supports them to become good leaders. The senior leadership team is making a real impact on improving teaching and learning across the school. They regularly check how well pupils are learning in lessons and over time. Leaders use this information well to review how things are going and where extra effort is needed. Consequently, they have brought about rapid improvements to the rates of progress pupils make in mathematics and in writing.
- All leaders set high expectations of staff. The performance of staff is well managed. Areas for professional development are suitably identified and provided for and success is celebrated. The impact of this can be seen in improving outcomes for pupils.
- The school offers a broad and balanced curriculum to support pupils' academic and emotional development. Extra-curricular clubs are also on offer and pupils are especially proud of representing their school in local sports events. Pupils said that they would like a wider range of activities to be on offer after school.
- Any additional government funds, such as the pupil premium grant and sports funding, are directed carefully to support pupils' engagement in learning and the progress they make. The impact of this money is carefully monitored by governors and an annual report is available on the school's website.
- The school promotes fundamental British values consistently through pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development. Pupils respect one another and learn about the different cultures and beliefs within their school. Teachers provide opportunities within lessons for pupils to reflect on their own beliefs and those of others. For example, when learning about creation stories, pupils consider the views of Christians, Jews, Muslims and Buddhists as well as considering what science says about how the world was created.
- The school's focus on equal opportunities ensures that pupils are treated fairly regardless of their background. However, although pupils understand that name-calling is wrong, they do not always understand why.
- Although most parents are positive about the school, leaders do not ensure that they are as involved in their children's learning as they could be. This means that pupils' progress is not as strong as it could be, because parents are not given the opportunity to build on what their children have learned at school.

Governance of the school

- The governing body works effectively and shares in the school's vision and ethos.
- The chair of governors takes a wise and measured approach to his role. Governors' individual skills and experience are used well to support the school to continue to improve.
- Governors support senior leaders, holding them to account for the progress different groups of pupils make. Governors are equipped with the information they need to understand how pupils' progress is measured. They are not afraid to ask challenging questions about underachievement and have visited the school to see the impact of leaders' actions. For example, they have checked what difference the school's assessment system is making.
- Governors ensure that the school's appraisal policy is implemented effectively. They ensure that targets for staff are suitably challenging. They have a good understanding of how the school rewards good performance of staff.
- Governors closely monitor the impact of any additional funds to make sure that they are used to improve pupils' achievement.
- Governors pay close attention to the rigour and effectiveness of the school's safeguarding procedures.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. There are well-developed child protection procedures that are rigorously followed and understood by all staff. Staff benefit from regular and appropriate training. This means that the structures to support early identification and rapid response to concerns are a strength of the school. Staff work with families and partners in social care and in the community to ensure that pupils are safe and well cared for.
- All staff and visitors are subject to the appropriate checks so that there is no doubt that the school is a secure and safe place to be. These are diligently included on a well-maintained central register.
- Leaders have ensured that there is effective support for vulnerable pupils and their families. For example, the team of learning mentors are particularly effective. This is because they know pupils and their families well. They offer good support to encourage regular and prompt attendance at school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The high expectations of the senior team have led to improvements in teaching across the school.
- The headteacher and her staff have developed a curriculum and assessment system to meet the needs of all pupils and support them in making good progress across a range of subjects. Previous poor teaching has been challenged and expectations raised. This has resulted in significant improvements in pupils' outcomes.
- The raised expectations in pupils' progress are confirmed in pupils' work in books, visits to classrooms, discussions with pupils and the school's own checks of the quality of teaching over time.
- Teachers use assessment information well to plan lessons to meet the needs of the pupils of varying abilities. They set 'good', 'amazing' and 'awesome' levels of challenge,

which helps pupils to make good progress in their learning from their different starting points. However, the tasks set for the most able do not always stretch them enough.

- Good teaching across the school ensures that all pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, the disadvantaged and most-able disadvantaged and pupils from different ethnic backgrounds, make at least good progress.
- Teachers' secure subject knowledge, particularly in writing, supports pupils to make faster progress in their learning. For example, in Year 5, pupils practised writing a persuasive letter. The teacher asked a pupil to read the beginning of her letter and reinforced the pupil's good use of adjectives, noun phrases and very rich vocabulary.
- In mathematics, pupils are making much greater progress over time as teachers rigorously check pupils' understanding and set them appropriate next steps for learning.
- Across the curriculum, teachers' good use of questioning encourages pupils to think more deeply. In a Year 4 drama lesson, the teacher's questions supported pupils to explore the historical period they were learning about. As a consequence, the pupils developed a much more secure knowledge and understanding of that time in history.
- The majority of teaching support assistants provide valuable encouragement to pupils with specific learning needs. However, the impact of their work is inconsistent.
- Most-able pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to apply their reading skills. This means that they do not secure the skills needed to write to their potential.
- The high standards of presentation in English and mathematics books are not consistent across other subjects.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and feel safe. They talk about ways in which they can stay safe, including when they are online.
- The school's work to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. For example, Year 2 pupils enjoy learning about Japan and how different life is there. They learn to recite poems and sing songs in Japanese and enjoy trying different Japanese foods.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to staying fit and healthy. They enjoy healthy snacks and exercise during the school day.
- The school respects the rights of all pupils and is developing the role of pupil ambassadors to ensure a fair way for pupils to share any views, suggestions and concerns.
- Pupils attend school regularly and overall attendance has improved. Consequently, attendance is now in line with the national average. A daily breakfast club which is attended by over 100 pupils each day ensures that pupils are punctual and ready to learn.
- Pupils are exceptionally proud of their school and show high levels of respect to staff, pupils and visitors alike. Pupils do not always show the same high level of pride in their work.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. All staff have very high expectations of pupils' behaviour and support them well in achieving good standards. For the minority of pupils who find this more of a challenge, teachers employ good strategies to make sure that any poor behaviour does not get in the way of learning.
- Pupils feel that behaviour is improving and if they have any concerns, they are properly and fairly dealt with by adults.
- Incidents of bullying are rare. Pupils say that if bullying does happen then teachers will sort it out quickly.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and as they move around the school. Good behaviour could be even better supported if the school developed stronger relationships with parents and the local community.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Historically pupils have not achieved as well as they could. Importantly, the floor standards were not met in 2015. However, current pupils are making strong and sometimes rapid progress from their starting points. Work in books is often of a very high standard. Effective and improved teaching means that pupils' outcomes are now good and improving. This is as a direct result of the differences made to provision since the arrival of the headteacher. Results in several key areas, such as the Year 1 phonics screening test, have shown year on year improvement. Results in 2016 showed that pupils were much better prepared for their next stage of education than had previously been the case.
- Children enter the nursery with skills that are much lower than is typical for their age. However, because of the strong use of assessment, leaders ensure that pupils' specific and individual needs are identified early. Consequently, children make strong progress through the early years, so that they are very well prepared for key stage 1.
- In 2016, most pupils in Year 1 achieved the expected standard in the national phonics check. This is because the teaching of phonics has been improved since the arrival of the new headteacher. However, the legacy of weaker teaching in the past means that some pupils in key stage 2 are not able to draw on phonics to help them read as well as they should.
- Pupils make good progress through key stage 1 and so leave having attained results that are broadly average.
- Although achievement across key stage 2 has been inconsistent in the past, pupils made much better progress towards reaching the expected standards in all subjects in 2016. Consequently, the proportion of pupils who attained the expected level in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 was broadly average. Therefore, pupils are well equipped with the academic and personal resilience to enjoy their secondary schools.
- Currently, pupils make at least good progress in a wide range of subjects. Disadvantaged pupils, most-able disadvantaged pupils, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and pupils from different ethnic backgrounds are currently making good progress. Standards are improving, particularly in mathematics and writing. However, leaders have rightly identified there is more to do to ensure that the most able attain the higher standard in reading.

- Pupils speak enthusiastically about reading and most enjoy reading stories and novels, but there are too few opportunities during the school day for pupils to read fiction and non-fiction texts with an adult. Not enough pupils read regularly at home. Consequently, pupils' progress in reading, although reasonable, does not match the improving rates of pupils' progress in mathematics and writing.

Early years provision

Good

- The early years leader, along with her staff, demonstrates an accurate understanding of the provision needed for the children in the Nursery and Reception classes.
- Assessment is accurate and thorough so that the needs of all the children are met in a timely manner. This ensures that children make good progress from their differing starting points. The children are well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- The children enjoy a safe and vibrant indoor and outdoor environment with a variety of activities to support their progress in each of the learning areas. Children engage enthusiastically in their discoveries. For example, two boys dressed as firemen rushed to put out a fire, and after trying out different ideas, decided to use a vacuum hose. Thanks to the careful questions from the nursery teacher, they clearly explained why the hose was the best piece of equipment for the job.
- Children are developing good relationships well and this aspect of learning is developed skilfully by staff. Although at the time of the inspection many of the children had only been in school for three or four sessions, an early focus on routine has meant that children were settled and are working together with a good deal of cooperation.
- Staff work hard to engage with families and are working hard to further extend these relationships.

School details

Unique reference number	110355
Local authority	Milton Keynes
Inspection number	10019866

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	370
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Will Swann
Headteacher	Louise Aird
Telephone number	01908 679 354
Website	www.falconhurstschool.co.uk
Email address	office@fcsch.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	17–18 September 2014

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The headteacher was appointed in September 2015 to support the school for three days each week and was appointed to the permanent full-time post starting in January 2016. The deputy headteacher started her role in September 2016.
- The school is a larger than average-sized primary school, with a Nursery and a Reception class.
- Pupils come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds and there are twice as many pupils who speak English as an additional language as there are nationally.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is slightly below other schools nationally.
- The proportion of pupils who receive support through the pupil premium is higher than the national average.

- The school does not meet the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- A breakfast club is provided by the school for all pupils.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed lessons in all classes and in a range of subjects.
- Inspectors spent time in the Nursery and Reception class.
- An inspector attended breakfast club.
- Inspectors looked at the school's website.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and looked at work in pupils' books alongside subject leaders.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, phase leaders, the physical education coordinator, teaching staff, office staff and learning mentors. An inspector met with four members of the governing body, including the chair. A meeting was also held with the local authority adviser.
- A group of pupils discussed their opinions about the school and their learning with an inspector. Inspectors also spoke informally with pupils around the school.
- The inspectors took account of seven staff questionnaires and the results of a staff questionnaire issued in July 2016. Ten responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, were also considered, along with 10 written comments. Inspectors had discussions with 15 parents before, during and after school.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of the school's documentation, including information on pupils' outcomes, monitoring records, the school's evaluation of its own performance and its targeted improvement plan. Governors' minutes, behaviour and attendance records and information relating to safeguarding were also scrutinised.

Inspection team

Sarah Varnom, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Kevin Burrell	Ofsted Inspector
Christopher Crouch	Ofsted Inspector

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

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

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, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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

© Crown copyright 2016