

# Falconer School

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	117686
<b>Local Authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	339048
<b>Inspection dates</b>	1–2 December 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Sue Aldridge

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.  
The inspection of social care was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Boys
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	70
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Y Fitton
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr M G Williamson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	2 May 2007
<b>School address</b>	Falconer Road Bushey Hertfordshire
<b>Telephone number</b>	0208 9502505
<b>Fax number</b>	0208 4218107
<b>Email address</b>	head@falconer.herts.sch.uk

---

<b>Age group</b>	11–16
<b>Inspection dates</b>	1–2 December 2009
<b>Inspection number</b>	339048

---

<b>Boarding provision</b>	School House
<b>Social care Unique Reference Number</b>	SC056408
<b>Social care inspector</b>	David Morgan

---

---

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 Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 08456 404045, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

Royal Exchange Buildings  
St Ann's Square  
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors and a social care inspector. The inspectors visited 15 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff, and pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at policies, development planning, tracking information and students' work. They analysed questionnaires returned by pupils, staff and 11 parents.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- how effectively the school promotes key skills across all subjects and lessons
- the impact of learning mentors and the home liaison team on outcomes for students
- the extent to which the school promotes equalities and community cohesion.

## Information about the school

The school provides for students with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. All the boys have a statement of special educational needs. Most students are of White British origin and seven are of mixed heritage. A small number are in public care. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is above average. Many students have experienced interrupted education when they arrive at the school. Although most enter in Year 7, students may enter throughout the age range or at any time of the year. There is alternative provision in the form of a motor vehicle project on the school site, which is managed by the headteacher on behalf of the governors. This provides up to 12 places for multiply excluded students aged 14-16. They follow accredited vocational courses in motor vehicle maintenance. Unusually, the school provides its own transport daily, using its own staff. It operates an extended day on two evenings each week. Its work has been recognised by the Healthy Schools Award and the Hertfordshire Quality Award for Careers Education and Guidance.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

### Main findings

Falconer is popular with parents and most students enjoy coming to school. Because the school's systems for encouraging good behaviour are effective and valued by the students, this improves rapidly. Students are particularly well supported by staff who act as learning mentors or are members of the home liaison team. These staff maintain an ongoing dialogue with students and their parents, and work effectively with a range of external agencies to ensure that additional support is made available to students and their families. Interactions with staff, who provide good role models, and the well-designed personal, social, health and citizenship education programmes combine well to encourage students to make healthy choices and behave safely. Occasional instances of bullying are dealt with effectively. Students contribute well to the school and wider communities.

Students' academic achievement is satisfactory. Although they make good progress in their time at the school and GCSE results in art are above average, attainment remains low because not enough reach nationally expected standards in English and mathematics by Year 11. The school makes a considerable difference to students' basic literacy skills by providing programmes to increase reading and spelling ages. There is a rising trend in the proportion of students being entered for full GCSE courses and this academic year is the first when a significant proportion of students will be entered for five or more full GCSE examinations. Older students are well informed about options at 16 and they develop realistic career aspirations. Since the last inspection there has been an increase in the proportion applying for college places, with the great majority now going on to courses in further education.

Students' good progress is the result of generally good and occasionally outstanding teaching. The school has rightly identified the need to improve assessment for learning. Excellent feedback is given about students' progress towards their personal behaviour targets and so they are crystal clear about how to conduct themselves in each lesson. Key Stage 4 students are always clear about the progress they are making and staff provide good guidance about examination or course requirements. At Key Stage 3, however, teachers do not always remember to share learning objectives with students and review these before the end of each session. Occasionally, expectations of more able students are not high enough in mathematics lessons at Key Stage 3. There is a tracking system but this does not enable staff to see academic progress in the short term, and students are therefore not aware of whether they are on track to achieve academic targets in each subject.

There has been good improvement in many areas since the last inspection, particularly in the accommodation and facilities. Good self-evaluation enables the school to identify

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

what needs further improvement. It analyses improvements in attendance, behaviour and progress in a range of ways, and keeps a close check on how well individuals are doing, particularly vulnerable students. As a result, all students are equally well served by the school. However, the school does not analyse the progress made by the small range of different groups, such as those who are in public care. Neither does it analyse whole-school gains so that it can compare its performance with other similar schools. It promotes community cohesion in a number of ways but does not measure the impact of what it does. Although governors visit and check first-hand on the school's work they are not systematically involved in self-evaluation. Despite these minor shortcomings, the school's success in securing improvement shows that the capacity to improve further is good.

**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Strengthen assessment for learning procedures by:
  - providing a suitable challenge for more able students in mathematics
  - ensuring that teachers routinely share with students the learning objectives in lessons and review these before the end of the session
  - refining the tracking system to enable staff to evaluate students' progress in the short term.
- Increase the effectiveness of self-evaluation by:
  - ensuring that governors are fully and systematically involved in the process
  - evaluating the academic progress of students as a whole and for different groups
  - comparing the progress that students make with that made by students in similar schools
  - evaluating the impact of what the school does to promote community cohesion.
- About 40% of schools whose overall effectiveness is satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit from an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****3**

The progress made by boys in almost all lessons during the inspection was good or better. Lessons are calm and purposeful and students respond well to high expectations of work rate and behaviour. They are motivated to earn points during lessons and know precisely what they need to do to get these. They generally behave well and few sessions are disrupted. They show interest in the topics and tasks presented, and ask as well as answer questions. Occasionally they learn from one another, by reading on to find the meaning of an unfamiliar word in a shared text in English, for example. They enjoy using information and communication technology (ICT) as a learning tool, and concentrate very well during ICT lessons because they wear headphones and listen to music selected themselves. The frequent references to course requirements enable

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

them to chart their progress towards completing coursework and they are quite willing to use constructively those sessions provided to enable them to catch up if they miss or do not complete work. They respond well to timed tasks, showing enthusiasm for 'beating the clock'. Work in their portfolios is completed carefully and presented well, often using ICT, to give photographic evidence of achievements for instance. Because vulnerable students are so well supported through the pastoral system and flexible use of the boarding provision, they make similar progress to other groups of pupils. Inevitably, those with patchy attendance do not achieve as well as those who attend regularly.

The school provides a wide range of opportunities for students to achieve recognition and take increasing responsibility and they value the privileges and rewards that they earn. Those who serve as school councillors or house captains take their responsibilities seriously. Houses select charities to support and energetically raise funds for these. The boys also raise funds for a link school in Africa. Students contribute to the life of the local church and a group of Year 11 students is involved in teaching a group of gifted and talented students in a local secondary school to scuba dive. Students say that they feel safe in school, and show a good understanding of how to keep healthy and safe. They enjoy representing the school in competitive sports and the fitness centre on site is a popular resource. The school provides healthy meals and snacks and boys adhere to the school's 'no smoking materials on site' rule. The curriculum provides good opportunities for students to develop their cultural awareness. A visit to a local synagogue for Holocaust Memorial Day drew positive written comments about the boys' conduct from a member of the public. In school, offensive language and remarks are always challenged and swearing is rarely heard from older boys. A reduction over the years in incidents and exclusions testifies to the school's success in improving behaviour. Attendance has improved significantly this term since the school revised its entry criteria for the motor vehicle project.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

<b>Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate</b> Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms	
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b> Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	<b>3</b>
	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective is the provision?

Although the school finds it difficult to recruit suitable qualified teaching staff it 'grows its own' through the graduate teaching programme, thereby developing teachers who are committed to working in a school such as this. Staff are well trained in teaching pupils with behavioural difficulties, and so students are well managed. Subject expertise is also strong, and teachers provide a wide range of courses, some unusual but particularly appealing to the boys. In the scuba diving course, students learn physics, chemistry and physiology as part of the theory test. They also acquire a range of certificates that are of value when they leave to go to college or employment, such as Entry level certificates, adult literacy and numeracy awards or qualifications in motor vehicle maintenance. Literacy and numeracy skills are taught well in subjects other than English and mathematics, and ICT is used effectively as a learning tool, although the school is developing this further. The school strives to provide a range of learning experiences that reflect boys' aptitudes and aspirations, and is constantly reviewing provision to achieve a high level of personalisation that reflects individual needs. The extended day and extras provided as rewards enrich the curriculum well. Motocross and buggy driving are particular favourites.

Learning mentors and home liaison staff provide strong support for students and their families. Students appreciate the involvement of learning mentors, who monitor their progress, listen, and support the target setting process. Additional provision or support in aspects such as anger management or mental health is secured through well established links with external agencies. The curriculum is supplemented well by using the facilities in mainstream schools, such as for physical education, and gifted and talented students occasionally attend mainstream part-time for specialist teaching. The motor project provides well-matched provision for students who have experienced multiple exclusions from other settings, and work completed there leads to accreditation that offers the first step in a vocational qualification. Students in Key Stage 4 benefit from a college link, work experience and a well-designed careers course. Guidance from staff and Connexions leads to almost all continuing their education beyond 16 and a few find employment.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<p><b>Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate</b> Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms</p>	
---	--

<p><b>The quality of teaching</b> Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning</p>	<b>2</b>
	3
<p><b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b></p>	<b>2</b>
<p><b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b></p>	<b>2</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

Staff work hard to make sure that each student has an equal chance of success, by removing the barriers that they have to learning and giving them experiences that appeal to them and build their self-esteem. Challenging targets are set for improving students' attainment, behaviour and attendance. There is a very positive ethos in the school and all staff share a commitment to continual improvement. Leadership roles are widely shared and all subject leaders contribute to self-evaluation and improvement planning. Subject improvement plans are ambitious and well linked to whole-school developments. Governors hold subject leaders to account through review meetings and some visit school and observe teaching. They ask questions about developments being considered, making sure that these are well supported. They are not yet involved directly in self-evaluation though, and a few staff feel that they are not seen enough in the school.

The school misses some opportunities to evaluate the impact of what it does. For instance, it has a sound range of ways of promoting community cohesion, such as curricular inputs on racism in sport, but does not assess the impact of this. An assistant headteacher provides training in mainstream schools in managing difficult behaviour, but this is not formally evaluated. Improvements in attendance and behaviour are evaluated well, and differences between groups considered, but the school does not do the same with information on students' progress and its search for a means of comparing itself with similar schools has not been successful. Arrangements for keeping boys safe are good. Health and safety have a high profile, recruitment procedures are robust and all staff are well trained in child protection matters. Staff who drive boys to and from school have suitable training and vehicles are well maintained. The continuity provided through this unusual arrangement is of considerable benefit to students, who arrive at school calm and ready to learn.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<p><b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b> Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning</p>	<b>2</b>
	2
<p><b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b></p>	<b>3</b>



**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

**Boarding provision**

A good standard of welfare is provided by the residential unit accommodating up to a maximum of 10 boys. Improvements have been made to boys' safety regarding controlled drugs and fire safety. Staff benefit from clear residential policies, including a staff handbook. Almost all National Minimum Standards are met.

Boys have their health needs addressed well. There is accurate administration of medication and close liaison with health professionals and parents. Good health is strongly promoted with plentiful nutritious food including readily available fresh fruit. Staff pay close attention to sugary food intake which can exacerbate poor behaviour. The boys also learn to enjoy sociable meals and to apply correct table manners.

The boys are safeguarded well. Appropriate policies are in place and the staff understand them and how to implement them. Boys report that staff routinely tell them how to keep safe. It is a reflection of the good practice that staff also take into account boys' activities outside school, in the holidays and weekends, when there is less supervision and they require more self-control. Boys report that bullying occurs in school, however, this is at a low level and is effectively managed by staff; there is similarly effective management of absconding. Of particular significance in the whole school is the management of boys' behaviour due to the challenges they can present; overall, boys feel staff are fair. There are good outcomes in this area and boys learn important life skills regarding self-control, manners and the application of acceptable behaviour. The headteacher monitors and cross-references any physical interventions to ensure appropriate practice.

The residential service makes an outstanding contribution to education. This is achieved by having strong communication with both parents and teachers and providing a service that supports and extends the education provision. Leisure opportunities are extensive and contribute significantly to boy's self-esteem and skills. Staff endeavour to support boys both during and after school-time, for example by helping them to attain sports qualifications. In the residential unit, sports and other recreational activities are used constructively and thoughtfully. The individual support to boys is satisfactory although elements of it are excellent. Too little attention is given to systematically addressing a programme of personal, social and health matters and to ensuring cultural issues are

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

promptly reviewed.

As part of the good attention paid to helping boys make a positive contribution, there is excellent communication by staff with boys and their families. The school allocates substantial resources to engaging and supporting families, especially through its home liaison team. However, regarding admission and discharges, there is an insufficiently clear process for admissions and this creates potential shortfalls for boys at this critical time. For example, it is not clear that the fire safety procedure is explained. On the other hand, there is a strong care planning process that ensures staff are addressing important issues with boys.

Residential staff contribute well to helping boys achieve economic well-being. For example, there is routine attention to budgeting and household matters and processes are underway to make this more systematic for each boy. Good work is undertaken with boys who are preparing to leave School House. Overall, the accommodation itself is well presented, clean and light, and meets the needs of the boys well.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Care plans strongly reflect individual needs. Boys are also exposed to, and challenged about, issues of diversity in the larger community through teaching, events in school, activities arranged by the house, and key worker sessions.

School House is managed and monitored well and there is a positive and energetic staff team. Staffing levels themselves are generous and facilitate close individual care. Attention to records is good too, and boys are involved as much as possible with their own records. Any problems, for example with belongings, are raised with parents. Files, however, are insufficiently clear about who has legal parental responsibility, which is necessary for consent to treatments, and other legal matters. The system of staff supervision is generally sound but attention is necessary to ensure no gaps arise repeatedly, for example in the supervision of the manager. Training too has a high priority but gaps have arisen regarding behaviour management, medicine administration and autism training, which have a potentially negative effect on boys. The manager is due to start the necessary National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) at level 4 in the new year.

**National Minimum Standards (NMS) to be met to improve social care**

- Ensure children are helped to develop individual identity in relation to their gender, religious, racial, cultural or linguistic backgrounds. (NMS 22.6)
- Ensure there are procedures for introducing children on admission and that they cover the required issues. (NMS 11.2)
- Ensure each child's file contains details of each person with parental responsibility. (NMS 18.2)
- Ensure that the training programme addresses all the required issues and that all staff have received training appropriate to their role. (NMS 29.4 and 29.6)
- Ensure the head of care attains a professional qualification at the appropriate level. (NMS 31.2)
- Ensure all staff receive at least one and a half hours of one-to-one supervision from

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

a senior member of staff each half term. (NMS 30.2)

*This is the grade for the boarding provision*

<b>The effectiveness of the boarding provision</b>	<b>2</b>
--	----------

## **Views of parents and carers**

Almost all parents are very positive about the school. Several wrote particularly complimentary comments, praising the 'fantastic' and 'dedicated' staff. A common observation was that the school had given their son a future where others had failed. They noted improvements in behaviour, academic achievement and emotional adjustment. One concern was about bullying. Inspectors looked into this and found that the matter is taken seriously at Falconer. Boys who were asked about this said that it does occasionally occur but that it is dealt with effectively. A high proportion of boys who returned questionnaires say that they feel safe in the school, particularly those in residence.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Falconer School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 11 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 70 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	8	73	2	18	1	9	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	7	64	3	27	1	9	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	7	64	4	36	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	7	64	3	27	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	9	82	1	9	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	7	64	4	36	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	7	64	4	36	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	5	45	4	36	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	9	82	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	9	82	1	9	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	8	73	2	18	0	0	1	9
The school is led and managed effectively	9	82	2	18	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	10	48	0	0	1	9	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



4 December 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Falconer School, Bushey, WD23 3AT

Thank you for making us welcome at Falconer and for talking to us about school life and showing us your work. We enjoyed our visit.

Your school's effectiveness is satisfactory. Although you make good progress while you are at the school, you do not reach standards that are quite high enough in all subjects. This year, there are more of you following GCSE courses because the staff realise that this is one way to raise standards further, particularly in English and mathematics.

We were impressed with the improvements that you make in your behaviour while you are at the school. Attendance has improved a great deal this term too. You certainly make healthy choices at school, by choosing healthy options and taking plenty of physical exercise. The fitness room is a real success! We were pleased to notice that you behave in a safe manner and show a good awareness of health and safety matters, particularly when you are in the motor vehicle workshops. We found that you willingly take on responsibilities at school and help others by raising funds for charities of your choice. Those that are helping students elsewhere to learn to scuba dive are contributing well too. We think that you have a really enjoyable range of learning experiences, and this helps you to be well motivated at school. School House makes a strong contribution to your all-round education, although we have made a number of recommendations to improve it further. We saw mostly good behaviour in lessons, especially in Key Stage 4, and were especially impressed with the way you concentrated and improved your work during ICT lessons.

The staff are already working to involve you more closely in your learning. We have asked them to give you challenging work in all mathematics lessons, to make sure that you know what learning targets are in every lesson, and to review your progress towards these by the end of each lesson. They are going to track and measure the progress you make and check to make sure that you all do equally well. This way they will be able to compare the school with others that are similar. The governors are going to get involved in measuring the school's success. You can help improve the school by attending regularly and keeping up the good work in lessons. We wish you well.

Yours sincerely

Mrs S Aldridge

Lead inspector



**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 08456 404045, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).**