

School inspection report

4 to 6 June 2024

Falcons School

7, 11, 22 and 24 Woodborough Road

Putney

London

SW 15 6PY

The Independent Schools Inspectorate is appointed by the Department for Education to inspect association independent schools in England. Our inspections report on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards and other applicable regulatory requirements are met, collectively referred to in this report as 'the Standards'.

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Summary of inspection findings

1. Governors have a clear understanding of their responsibilities. School leaders are well trained so they have the knowledge and skills needed to promote the wellbeing of pupils. Governors and senior leaders ensure that standards are consistently met. Leaders' decisions reflect the school's commitment to support pupils' emotional wellbeing as a prior requirement for effective learning.
2. The curriculum is broad and balanced, meeting the needs of all pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teachers plan lessons that take account of pupils' individual needs. Teachers expect pupils to always behave well. They use a humorous and supportive approach to encourage pupils to focus on their learning. Teachers use regular assessments to check pupils' progress and put the right support in place if needed. As a result, pupils make good progress overall, although the rate of progress is not consistently high across all subjects.
3. The comprehensive personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme helps pupils to grow in self-knowledge and self-esteem. The programme includes appropriate relationships and sex education (RSE) which develops pupils' understanding of healthy and mutually respectful relationships.
4. School leaders set high expectations for pupils' behaviour to which pupils respond positively. Pupils understand the anti-bullying strategies so bullying is rare. There is appropriate adult supervision throughout the day. Attendance records are carefully kept and monitored. Rigorous procedures ensure that arrangements for health and safety are followed. The school environment is secure and well maintained.
5. The PSHE programme helps pupils to understand the role of democracy in modern Britain and the importance of equality, tolerance, and respect for diversity. This helps prepare pupils for their future roles as effective citizens in modern Britain. Pupils are keen to take on roles of responsibility within the school. They successfully raise funds for their chosen charities. School leaders provide clear and well-informed advice for parents for the next stage of their children's education.
6. Strong safeguarding practices are firmly in place. All staff are trained and understand their responsibilities to keep pupils safe. The designated safeguarding leads (DSLs) take appropriate action to support pupils' safety and wellbeing, including liaising with local authority agencies when needed.

The extent to which the school meets the Standards

- Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance are met.
- Standards relating to the quality of education, training and recreation are met.
- Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing are met.
- Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society are met.
- Standards relating to safeguarding are met.

Recommended next step

Leaders should:

- ensure that there are equally high expectations and high standards of teaching across all areas of the curriculum, including sports, so that pupils make consistently good progress in all subjects.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

7. School leaders and governors consider pupils' wellbeing and academic progress in their decision making. Leaders' actions support the school's success in creating a distinctive and happy, family environment. The wholehearted commitment of staff at all levels to put pupils first means that pupils, including the youngest children in early years, enjoy school life and achieve academic success.
8. Governors are experienced and well trained. They carry out their lead roles within the proprietorial body effectively. Governors provide appropriate support and challenge to school leaders. They ensure that school leaders have the knowledge and skills to perform their duties so that Standards are consistently met.
9. Governors visit the school and speak with staff and pupils as part of their review process. The chair of governors has regular discussions with the headteacher. Such measures give governors a thorough and accurate insight into the prep school.
10. Governors review the effectiveness of policies and check that these are being followed so that the wellbeing of the pupils is consistently promoted. Governors and leaders conduct thorough reviews of all aspects of school's provision, drawing on data to analyse its success. They have a clear vision for the school's future as it becomes fully co-educational. Governors use their different areas of expertise to plan for further development.
11. Leaders and governors are alert to actual and possible risk. They put steps in place to mitigate risks. For example, the access to the school buildings is secure and pupils are escorted when crossing the main road between buildings. Leaders have thought carefully about the potential risks and curricular changes needed as male pupils join the prep school. Leaders at all levels are committed to promoting diversity and equality, including an understanding of and respect for neurodiversity. There is a suitable accessibility plan in place. Leaders use this plan to improve access to the premises and the curriculum for pupils. The school meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.
12. All required policies and information are made available either on the website or from the school office. Any concerns or complaints are managed in line with the school's policy. At the time of the inspection, all complaints had been resolved. Leaders liaise with the local authority as required on funding for pupils who have an education, health and care plan (EHC plan). Leaders are vigilant with all matters relating to health and safety, including fire prevention. The school site and buildings are clean, tidy and well maintained.
13. Governors and leaders fully understand their safeguarding responsibilities. Governors conduct an annual review of safeguarding policies and procedures as required. The school liaises appropriately with other agencies such as the police, local authorities as well as health professionals. Recruitment processes are managed centrally by the proprietorial body. Governors check that these are robust and information is recorded as required.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance

14. All the relevant Standards are met.

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

15. The school's curriculum is broad. It reflects the school's aim to encourage pupils to be ambitious and curious. Pupils learn to speak, read and write fluently. They develop a rich and sophisticated vocabulary, building steadily on the strong foundations for language development established in early years. Pupils develop a good understanding of mathematical and scientific concepts. For example Year 2 pupils explain the terms transpiration and evaporation confidently and accurately. Pupils use information and communication technology (ICT) to enhance their learning. Leaders encourage pupils' creativity and aesthetic awareness through numerous musical and performance opportunities. Pupils create high-quality artwork.
16. Pupils who have SEND receive thorough and effective support. This enables them to learn effectively and achieve well. Leaders and teachers check that these pupils make sufficient progress. Pupils who speak English as an additional language rapidly gain fluency in spoken English because teachers model correct pronunciation and extend their vocabulary.
17. Teachers know their pupils well. They use regular assessments to identify any gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding. Teachers tailor lessons to meet pupils' individual needs and aptitudes. Pupils are provided with appropriate levels of challenge so they can extend their learning. Teachers explain the purpose of lessons so pupils understand what they will learn and why this is important. Teachers provide pupils with clear feedback on how to improve their work further. Teachers' high expectations and warm encouragement help children in early years to make rapid progress. Many of them reach standards beyond those expected by the time they leave Reception. Year 6 pupils attain highly and gain places at the senior schools of their choice.
18. Pupils make good progress across the curriculum. Leaders' careful planning includes imaginative cross curricular activities that stimulate pupils' interest and determination to do well. For example, in an English project, Year 5 pupils develop their creative writing, artistic and ICT skills to upload films of their poetry readings that are accessed via QR codes. Pupils' progress in English is especially rapid. Children who join the school in Nursery with no English quickly learn to speak and take part in group discussions. Pupils in the upper prep write fluently for a range of different purposes. They use an imaginative range of vocabulary and demonstrate a firm understanding of spelling and grammar. In mathematics and humanities, where teaching does not always promote high expectations, pupils' progress is not so rapid.
19. Pupils generally take care with the presentation of their work and are proud of the progress they make. Pupils are enthusiastic learners. They are keen to ask and to respond to questions during lessons. They listen carefully to their teachers and follow instructions promptly. Pupils collaborate and work well together. They focus on the task in hand and do not waste any time.
20. Leaders ensure that parents are kept informed of their children's progress through regular reports and parent conferences. Parents are also invited to attend activities such as curriculum discussions and forums on how to support their children's learning.
21. Pupils are provided with a wide choice of extra-curricular activities. These include an extensive range of creative, physical and academic opportunities. Debating and public speaking clubs help build pupils' self-confidence. Life skills sessions include learning about first aid and how to use British Sign

Language. Pupils value the rich range of activities offered beyond the formal curriculum. This supports pupils' character-building and wellbeing, as well as their academic success.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to the quality of education, training and recreation

22. All the relevant Standards are met.

Section 3: Pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing

23. Leaders promote the importance of creating a warm, caring environment as a prior requirement for successful learning. Relationships at all levels are characterised by mutual respect. The school's pastoral approach, as modelled by teachers, is reflected in pupils' demeanour and interactions with each other. Pupils are supportive and caring. They help each other without prompting. Pupils like their teachers and feel valued by them. The school provides a positive, welcoming environment that is highly conducive to learning.
24. The curriculum encourages pupils' awareness of other belief systems with visits to a range of places of worship. Themed lunches and assemblies mark various festivals such as Lunar New Year and Eid. The PSHE programme teaches pupils the importance of non-material values such as empathy, kindness and respect for all, regardless of differences of opinion or belief.
25. Staff in early years develop positive and warm relationships with children. This helps children to understand and manage their emotions. Children learn how to cope with frustrations and to resolve conflicts peacefully. Pupils throughout the school grow in confidence and resilience because they are consistently encouraged to believe in themselves. They receive praise for their resilience when facing setbacks. Pupils know themselves and their abilities well. They talk confidently about their achievements and their ambitions.
26. Pupils understand the importance of healthy eating. They label food items in the tuck shop with health ratings and charge more for unhealthy options. Pupils enjoy taking part in the planned physical fitness activities. Children in early years use the playground equipment and explore the forest area to develop their gross physical skills. Prep pupils develop their stamina and fitness during physical education and games lessons.
27. The PSHE programme includes elements on self-knowledge and self-care techniques such as calming breathing exercises. The RSE curriculum for younger pupils includes age-appropriate topics such as how to be a good friend. Older pupils and their parents value the school's frank and open approach to sex education, which ensures that pupils are well prepared for their physical changes during puberty.
28. Pupils know and live up to leaders' high expectations for behaviour. Pupils are sensible. They are invariably polite and thoughtful. Pupils know that unkindness and bullying are entirely unacceptable. They recite an oath that affirms their opposition to bullying. Records show that instances of bullying are extremely rare. Teachers respond swiftly and firmly to any unkind incidents, in line with the school's policy.
29. Pupils are suitably supervised throughout the day and when off-site. In early years, staff are always in sight and hearing of children. Admissions and attendance registers are completed as required and absences followed up swiftly. Leaders inform the local authority when pupils join or leave the school at non-standard times.
30. The school and its grounds are kept to a high standard. Health and safety checks, including for playground equipment and for fire prevention, are carried out regularly. Leaders take action as

required. All staff are trained in paediatric first aid. There is suitable provision for pupils who are injured or unwell during the school day.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing

31. All the relevant Standards are met.

Section 4: Pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society

32. Pupils are encouraged to be resilient, ambitious and curious using the 'hedgehog habits of learning'. Pupils' interests show their engagement with global issues. Pupils are keen members of the eco warriors committee. They are conscious of the impact of climate change and pollution on the environment. The geography curriculum encourages pupils to explore the local environment and the wider world. In art lessons, pupils complete a project based on the cityscape around the river Thames.
33. The PSHE programme teaches pupils that everyone has a legal as well as a moral right to be treated equally and with respect. Teachers make sure that pupils know what is meant by protected characteristics. Teachers encourage pupils to think deeply about attitudes to difference, such as physical ability, belief, or ethnicity. For example, pupils debate if respecting another's accent is important and consider whether the experiences of Black British women are reflected sufficiently in Britain's history.
34. Pupils describe the school as an inclusive place where everyone is welcomed. Children in Reception answer the daily register using the language of their choice. Pupils enjoy learning about the celebrations of different cultures. Pupils speak easily about neurodiversity, knowing and respecting that brains are wired differently and that this may affect someone's behaviour and learning. Lessons in British Sign Language help pupils to understand how challenges linked to a physical disability can be overcome.
35. Teachers encourage pupils to reflect on their own strengths and ambitions for their futures. Leaders engage with parents as they consider the next step for their children's education.
36. Leaders encourage pupils to develop firm principles and an understanding of the difference between right and wrong. Early years staff teach children to think of others and to take turns. Older pupils confidently discuss matters of principle, such as how to avoid possible issues of sexism as male pupils join the prep school.
37. Pupils are responsible and thoughtful. Children in early years are quick to help tidy up after an activity. They take pride in being chosen to remind others of the timetable for the day. Prep pupils apply in writing for election to one of the school's three committees. Pupils' discussions in the fairness committee meetings show a strong understanding of the need for responsible behaviour, for example in respecting the playground equipment and the safety of other pupils while playing.
38. Pupils' understanding of Britain's legal and political structures is supported by visits from the area school safety police officer and local politicians. Teachers make pupils' learning relevant. Following the announcement of a general election, teachers adapted their lesson plans swiftly to include preparing a mock election. Pupils learn about political philosophies such as socialism and capitalism. Prior to creating their own manifesto promises, pupils read and analyse political manifestos and the data on important electoral issues.
39. Economic education is encouraged throughout the school. Nursery children exchange tokens for pretend ice creams in imaginative play. Pupils in Year 5 are responsible for running the school tuck shop, with profits being invested in school facilities. An enterprise challenge for Year 6 pupils

involves marketing research before making, advertising and selling products, with profits being sent to the charities of their choice.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society

40. All the relevant Standards are met.

Safeguarding

41. Governors and school leaders are trained in safeguarding matters, including in the Prevent strategy, so that they have a thorough understanding of their responsibilities. Governors scrutinise the effectiveness of safeguarding as part of their regular reviews of the school's provision. The designated governor for safeguarding has appropriate experience in this area and provides advice and support to the DSLs as needed.
42. Leaders and staff have a robust understanding of the school's safeguarding procedures. The DSLs train all staff on safeguarding systems when they join the school. Leaders provide regular safeguarding updates for staff who are also alerted to any changes in procedures. Training records confirm that all staff have been reminded and understand the importance of vigilance and of alerting the DSL to any concerns.
43. The DSLs meet as a team regularly to discuss any emerging concerns. They work well with the local safeguarding partnership. They attend the area safeguarding sessions organised by the local authority. The DSLs do not hesitate to seek external advice. DSLs take prompt action when needed, including offering support to families. Decisions are driven by concern for pupils' wellbeing and safety. Pupils know how to report any concerns to their teachers and trust them to help. This supports pupils to feel safe and happy in school.
44. Pupils are taught the importance of keeping themselves safe online. There are robust filtering and monitoring systems in place. Leaders review these regularly to ensure pupils' safety.
45. Recruitment processes are thorough with all required checks completed before an individual starts to work at the school. Any anomalies are swiftly identified and rectified. Checks are recorded appropriately on the centralised register for school staff.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

46. All the relevant Standards are met.

School details

School	Falcons Prep School
Department for Education number	212/6051
Address	Falcons School 7, 11, 22 and 24 Woodborough Road Putney London SW15 6PY
Phone number	020 8992 5189
Email address	admin@falconsschool.co.uk
Website	www.falconsschool.co.uk
Proprietor	Inspired Education Group
Chair	Mr Nicholas Wergan
Headteacher	Mrs Sara Williams-Ryan
Age range	2 to 11
Number of pupils	141
Date of previous inspection	3 to 5 March 2020

Information about the school

47. Falcons School is a day school for pupils aged two to eleven, situated in the Putney suburb of London. Previously co-educational only in the Nursery setting, in October 2023 it registered to become fully co-educational. The school comprises the Peregrines Nursery school for children aged two to four, and a prep school for pupils from five to eleven. The Prep and Nursery school share facilities. The school is owned and governed by the Inspired Education Group.
48. The school has identified 17 pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). A very small proportion of pupils have an education, health and care plan (EHC plan).
49. There are 60 pupils who speak English as an additional language, the majority of whom are fluent in English.
50. The school states its aims are to create an inclusive environment which recognises the importance of emotional wellbeing in achieving academic success. It sets out to encourage pupils to be curious, ambitious and resilient learners who are prepared for their future roles as citizens.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

4 to 6 June 2024

51. A team of three inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.

52. Inspection activities included:

- observation of lessons, some in conjunction with school leaders
- observation of registration periods and assemblies
- observation of a sample of extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection
- discussions with the chair and other governors
- discussions with the head, school leaders, managers and other members of staff
- discussions with pupils
- visits to the learning support area and facilities for physical education
- scrutiny of samples of pupils' work
- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school.

53. The inspection team considered the views of pupils, members of staff and parents who responded to ISI's pre-inspection surveys.

How are association independent schools in England inspected?

- The Department for Education is the regulator for independent schools in England.
- ISI is approved by the Secretary of State for Education to inspect independent schools in England, which are members of associations in membership of the Independent Schools Council.
- ISI inspections report to the Department for Education on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards, the EYFS statutory framework requirements, the National Minimum Standards for boarding schools and any other relevant standards are met.
- For more information, please visit **www.isi.net**.

Independent Schools Inspectorate

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