

Inspection of Falcons Learning

Newport Street, Goole DN14 6TL

Inspection dates:

30 April to 2 May 2024

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

No

What is it like to attend this school?

Falcons Learning provides a safe, calm place where pupils feel they can be themselves. Adults value pupils' individuality and uniqueness. Many of the pupils have not attended a school for a considerable time, prior to starting at Falcons Learning. For many, starting at this school provides a positive reintegration into education. Adults recognise that these pupils may need time and space while they can learn to learn again.

Relationships are positive here. Adults support pupils to make appropriate choices about their behaviour. At times, some pupils find this difficult. Adults recognise this and spend time with these pupils to help them understand their reactions. Pupils learn how to modify these and respond appropriately. Pupils know that adults are there to support them. There is a strong atmosphere of trust in the school.

The school has high expectations for pupils' learning. They look for ways to interest and engage pupils. An example of this is the school's workshop area. Pupils work in here to study motor vehicle mechanics. They learn how to repair or restore machinery. Pupils thrive in this space. However, there is more to do to ensure that these learning opportunities are linked with each pupil's more formalised learning offer.

The school places great emphasis on supporting pupils' personal development. They support pupils to take responsibility for projects which are aimed at raising their self-esteem and aspirations for the future. Pupils create business plans, then research and source the materials they will need to bring these plans to life.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Since opening, the school has worked swiftly to create an environment which supports and engages the pupils, who all have education, health and care plans (EHC plan) for their special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The school takes time to get to know the pupils. This supports it in adapting learning to support pupils' interests. Staff receive detailed information about pupils with SEND. This information is reviewed regularly and ensures that pupils' varied social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs are well supported.

In some subjects, the curriculum is still being developed. While much has been done to ensure that all pupils can gain qualifications in core areas such as mathematics and English, learning in other areas of the curriculum is less well established. The tasks set in the workshop area ensure that pupils have 'real-life' daily mathematics, reading and writing opportunities, as they fill in job sheets or calculate costings for materials. However, this learning is not yet sufficiently linked to classroom activities to ensure that pupils' knowledge builds over time. There are some missed opportunities to extend pupils' understanding and to support them in achieving recognised qualifications that will support them beyond school.

In English, the school is determined to encourage pupils to learn to read. Plans are being created which aim to overcome individuals' barriers and 'start conversations' about books. Pupils who are finding reading difficult are supported with individualised lessons and texts which match their needs. However, more ambition is needed to promote a culture of reading regularly across the curriculum.

The school focuses on building connections between pupils and their learning. They are successful with many pupils. However, in the areas of the curriculum that are less well structured, pupils often struggle to maintain concentration. Staff understand this. They try to refocus pupils through positive encouragement and support. On many occasions, this is successful. When it is not, pupils distract others and take longer to reconnect with what they are learning.

The school works closely with families to promote regular attendance. This is proving to be successful with many pupils. The attendance of most pupils quickly improves once they join the school. For a small minority, this is not yet the case. The school is constantly seeking different ways to support this group of pupils to overcome their personal barriers which prevent them from attending regularly.

The personal development curriculum is well structured. This is taught strategically to ensure that pupils are well prepared for life beyond the school. Careers education is a strength of the programme. Gatsby benchmarks are used, and pupils receive regular independent careers advice. The school has strong links with local colleges. Pupils from Year 7 are encouraged to think about future pathways. The school is very clear about the risks pupils may face beyond the school. The personal, social, health and education programme is taught flexibly to ensure that issues in pupils' lives and any local contextual risks are addressed.

The proprietor is ambitious to develop the school further. They have put in place a governing body to assist them with oversight of school development and to ensure that the independent school standards (the standards) are met consistently. This body does not yet fulfil this role sufficiently well. Systems that support the proprietor's oversight of important policies and practices are not robust. The school does not currently have checks in place to ensure that the standards are met in all areas.

The proprietor has not ensured that the school's attendance and admissions registers are maintained correctly. Some important information regarding pupils' past and subsequent school placements was not up to date at the start of the inspection. Some pupil information regarding attendance at an alternative provision was also incorrect. This was rectified by the end of the inspection.

The proprietor has ensured that important health and safety and risk assessment policies are in place. However, there is not sufficient oversight to ensure that these are robustly implemented. At the start of the inspection, the proprietor had not ensured that specific toilets were allocated correctly for girls in one area of the school. Signage to indicate drinking-water for pupils was not in place. There was also an issue with water temperature regulation in one bathroom area. Some

generic and individual risk assessments had been created. There were no specific risk assessments for the three school dogs or the use of the minibus. These omissions were addressed during the inspection. However, some of the standards could not be met.

The proprietor has not made sure that Falcons Learning is compliant with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. During the inspection, there were several fire extinguishers and fire blankets not in designated locations. Consequently, these had not been checked during the school's most recent fire audit. Furthermore, important fire evacuation guidance was not in place and some signage was placed incorrectly. This was addressed during the inspection. However, some standards relating to the welfare, health and safety of pupils remained unmet at the end of the inspection.

Leaders have ensured that the school meets the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. The school's accessibility plan was not available on the school's website at the start of the inspection. However, school leaders rectified this oversight while inspectors were on site.

Prior to the start of the inspection, the school had requested a material change to their registration with the Department for Education (DfE). The proprietor wished to increase the admission number of pupils from 24 to 65 and age range of pupils from 11 to 16 years to 11 to 19 years. Inspectors were unable to recommend these changes due to a number of the standards not being met at the time of the inspection. This impacted the capacity of leaders to be able to implement the material change successfully. In discussions with inspectors, the proprietor recognised that they were not ready to implement this material change. They initially requested that the material change was amended to a change to the maximum number of pupils only with a maximum of 48. However, as the inspection progressed, the proprietor completely withdrew their application for a material change.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- The school has not ensured that all subjects have an appropriately planned and well-sequenced curriculum. This limits how well learning builds on what pupils have learned in the past and how well prepared they are for future learning. The school needs to ensure that all subjects and pathways have a clearly defined and sequenced curriculum that precisely identifies what skills and knowledge they want pupils to gain, including the opportunities pupils will access and when during the different stages of their time in the school.

- The proprietor has written policies to support the health, safety and well-being of pupils in school. These are not being implemented effectively, and the school does not have systems in place that allow it to monitor or evaluate this. The proprietors must ensure that appropriate systems are swiftly introduced which will ensure that all aspects of health and safety are monitored effectively and the standards are consistently met.
- Record-keeping in important areas such as attendance, admissions or behaviour are not sufficiently robust. Some entries do not contain enough detail, and some important information is not recorded. This means that some pupils' records do not contain all the information they should. Leaders should take action to ensure that record-keeping is purposeful and precise. All records should contain appropriate detail and all related information should be recorded.

How can I feed back my views?

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The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

School details

Unique reference number	149669
DfE registration number	811/6025
Local authority	East Riding of Yorkshire
Inspection number	10321509
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent special school
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	19
Proprietor	Stephen Wash
Headteacher	Stephen Wash
Annual fees (day pupils)	£42,000
Telephone number	01405470014
Website	www.falconslearning.com/
Email address	jowash@falconslearning.com

Information about this school

- This was the school's first standard inspection since the school was registered with the DfE on 4 May 2023.
- The school operates from Newport Street, Goole, DN14 6TL.
- The school does not use any alternative provisions.
- The school is registered to admit 24 pupils.
- The school supports pupils with a range of special educational needs, primarily SEMH needs.
- All pupils have an EHC plan.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

The school has failed to meet the independent school standards. These are the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the proprietor, who is also the headteacher of the school. Inspectors also met with some members of staff and some pupils.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, history and personal, social, health and economic education. Inspectors looked at curriculum plans, visited lessons, spoke to teaching and support staff and discussed learning with some pupils. Inspectors also looked at samples of pupils' work and some EHC plans.
- Inspectors spoke with leaders and staff about the school's approach to safeguarding pupils in school. Inspectors checked the single central record and reviewed records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding. Checks were made on staff training and safeguarding procedures. Inspectors checked the implementation of risk assessment and health and safety policies, including the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's surveys for parents and carers and staff. Inspectors also held telephone conversations with some parents.

The school's proposed change to the age range of pupils and the maximum number of pupils

The school has applied to the Department for Education (DfE) to make a 'material change' to its registration. At the DfE's request, we checked whether the school is likely to meet the relevant independent school standards if the DfE decides to approve the change. This part of the inspection was carried out under section 162(4) of the Education Act 2002.

- The outcome of this part of the inspection is: **the school is unlikely to meet the relevant independent school standards if the material change relating to the school provision is implemented.**

Information about the material change inspection.

- The school proposed to change the age range of pupils from 16 to 19 years of age and the maximum number of pupils from 24 to 65 pupils.
- Inspectors scrutinised the school's policies and procedures that were relevant to the proposed material change. They toured the school to check its suitability to accommodate the additional number of pupils.
- Inspectors discussed the proposed change with leaders and members of the proprietor body. Following the unmet standards in the school's standard inspection, the proprietors chose to withdraw their application for a material change.

Inspection team

Andrea Batley, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Gordon Watts

Ofsted Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school failed to meet the following independent school standards

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 11 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that relevant health and safety laws are complied with by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written health and safety policy.
- 12 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005[12].
- 15 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that an admission and attendance register is maintained in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006[13].
- 16 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that-
 - 16(a) the welfare of pupils at the school is safeguarded and promoted by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written risk assessment policy; and
 - 16(b) appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- 34(1) The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school-
 - 34(1)(a) demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently;
 - 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and
 - 34(1)(c) actively promote the well-being of pupils.

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