

Framwellgate School Durham

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	137696
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	388336
Inspection dates	18–19 January 2012
Lead inspector	David Brown

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,199
Of which number on roll in the sixth form	195
Appropriate authority	Excel Academy Partnership
Chair	Karen Cromarty
Headteacher	Joan Sjovoll
Date of previous school inspection	7 October 2008
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Introduction

Inspection team

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Additional inspector
Additional inspector
Additional inspector
Additional inspector
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 48 lessons, taught by 47 different members of staff. Of these, four were observed jointly with managers from the school. In total, they observed over 20 hours of teaching. Inspectors held meetings with nine groups of students, members of the governing body and school staff. They observed the school's work, scrutinised a range of documentation and examined evaluations undertaken by the school to ensure that it meets statutory requirements in relation to the safeguarding of students. In addition, they scrutinised 190 questionnaires from parents and carers and also examined questionnaires returned by staff and those from a representative sample of students. The inspectors looked at the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) but no responses were recorded.

Information about the school

Framwellgate School Durham is an above average-sized secondary school. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is lower than average, although this has risen since the time of the last inspection. Most students are of White British heritage and few students speak English as an additional language. The proportion of students with special educational needs and those with disabilities is broadly average. The proportion of students entering or leaving the school part way through the year is similar to the national average for secondary schools. At the time of the inspection an acting headteacher was in post.

The school meets the current floor standard (minimum standards expected by the government). It has held specialist status for science since 2004, holds training school status and is a national support school. The school has gained many awards, including the Investors in People status and hosts the regional science learning centre.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- This is a good school. Students' attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 is above average. Their achievement overall is good and improving but it is outstanding in English. Leaders and managers have taken effective steps to overcome the weaker achievement over the previous three years in mathematics and to raise students' achievement in the sixth form. Additional provision is in place to meet the needs of a small number of students who experience particular barriers to learning. This provision leads to students with special educational needs and those with disabilities making progress in line with that of their peers. The sixth form is good.
- Teaching is good throughout the school, although some teaching in the sixth form does not meet the needs of all students and does not actively support independent and group learning. The school is outward looking and uses collaboration, partnership work and highly effective professional development to drive up standards of teaching in all areas.
- Students behave well and are enthusiastic about school and the support they receive from adults. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive in their views of the school. Leaders are aware of the need to improve the attendance and persistent absence of students, both of which have been broadly in line with those seen nationally for a number of years.
- Leaders and managers have an accurate picture of those aspects of the school's work in need of further improvement. They have used their detailed evaluation of outcomes to improve both the quality of teaching and to design a highly flexible and personalised curriculum appropriate for all students. The governing body supports and challenges senior leaders well.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue recent improvements in the quality of students' learning and their progress in mathematics by:
 - maintaining and intensifying current successful strategies for improvement
 - sharing best practice within the school to increase further the proportion of good or better teaching in the subject.

- Improve students' achievement in the sixth form by:
 - widening opportunities for students to work with each other and to develop collaborative and independent learning skills
 - giving students further opportunities to take a leading role in their learning.

- Improve the attendance of all students and particularly those who are persistent absentees by continuing to work with all those responsible to ensure that they attend more regularly.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

The proportion of students achieving five or more A* to C grades, including English and mathematics, has been significantly above average in recent years and unvalidated results for 2011 show a similar positive picture. The responses from parents and carers and students to the inspection questionnaires support this view. Achievement in English has been outstanding for several years. However, students' attainment in mathematics has been much lower, largely because of instabilities in staffing in the department. Inspection evidence confirmed the school's view that achievement in mathematics is improving and that mathematics lessons now involve better planning for students of differing abilities and that this has increased the challenge for more-able students.

Students' progress is good overall. Students are keen to learn, work hard and they relate positively to their peers and teachers. Learning is best when teachers have high expectations of students and use a range of engaging activities, including opportunities for group and independent learning. Learning is weaker when there is too much teacher talk, students contribute little to the lesson, and the pace of work slows. Students of all ages are very aware of their targets and what they need to do to achieve them.

In the sixth form, examination results indicate that students make satisfactory progress. However, there are signs of improvement in the number of students obtaining the higher grades and observations confirmed that where teachers challenge students to think more deeply about their work better progress is made. Strong support and guidance for students in the sixth form leads to excellent progression and students rarely leave without a place at university, a job with training or a suitable course in further education.

Assessment information is used effectively throughout the school to support all students and in particular to identify and provide targeted support in lessons for those students with a disability and those with special educational needs. These students, together with those known to be eligible for free school meals, make good progress at similar rates to their peers.

Quality of teaching

Inspectors observed good, and at times outstanding teaching, in the great majority of lessons during the inspection. This supports the views of parents and carers that their children are taught well at the school. Strengths in teaching include consistent use of a detailed common lesson plan and the effective use of assessment information to plan lessons appropriate for students of different abilities. Teachers form very positive working relationships which motivate and engage the students in their learning. The best lessons are characterised by real enthusiasm for the subject, high expectations and an excellent range of targeted activities. In less effective lessons, activities do not meet the needs of all students, the range of teaching strategies is narrower and there is too much teacher talk.

In one Year 9 history lesson, for example, the teacher used a range of resources and teaching strategies to engage all students and to encourage them to work independently. Students showed respect for each other's opinions and their excellent behaviour produced a supportive climate for learning. In this lesson, students were given the time to develop and reflect on their own ideas. Similarly, in a Year 7 French lesson, the pace of learning new vocabulary was varied according to the need of individual students, leading to excellent progress in developing communication skills. The students displayed enthusiasm for their learning and worked together, well supported by a range of strategies provided by the teacher.

The school sets realistic and aspirational targets in partnership with students and these are used to effectively support learning throughout the school. Students' work is marked frequently and regularly and detailed comments provide students with clear information about the next steps for improving their subject knowledge and understanding. The PEN (praise, error, next step) assessment system completed by both teachers and students throughout the school, is understood by all, helps overcome student errors and misconceptions, and is contributing to improvements in progress. The system has been recently extended into the sixth form and students are positive on how it supports their improving academic progress.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Students say overwhelmingly that they feel safe in all areas of the school and that adults are very approachable if they have any concerns. They have a good understanding of the risks to which they may be exposed, both within and outside of school. Students' behaviour in lessons and around the school is at least good with very little disruption observed. They are routinely courteous to each other and to adults and this makes a positive contribution to a well ordered and safe school. Younger students appreciate the work of sixth form students as mentors and as

positive role models around the school site. Inspection evidence supports the views of parents and carers that behaviour in the school is good.

Incidences of bullying are rare although a small number of parents and carers expressed concerns to the inspection team that, on some occasions, the school has not dealt with incidents as effectively as it should, or that the school does not always communicate clearly the outcome of actions it has taken. Inspectors discussed these specific concerns with the acting headteacher. Rates of exclusion are well below the national average.

Levels of attendance and persistent absence have been broadly in line with those seen nationally for a number of years. The school has recently introduced measures to improve punctuality to school and to lessons. This has led to significant improvements and very little lateness was observed during the inspection.

Leadership and management

The headteacher and other leaders and managers, including members of the governing body, demonstrate a sustained vision for school improvement together with a consistent drive for improved outcomes for all students and groups. The school's capacity to improve is good. Leaders' self-evaluation, has correctly identified areas for improvement and they have introduced and implemented prioritised improvement plans through a sophisticated and wide ranging evaluation process. This process engages staff at all levels and focuses on student performance. A comprehensive programme of continued professional development activities and allied research, much of which involves an extensive range of external partners, supports clear improvements in teaching and learning. There are many collaborative opportunities for sharing best practice and for teachers to improve their skills.

Processes to monitor the quality of teaching are well established and involve leaders at all levels. Planned actions are helping to overcome weaknesses and raise achievement, particularly in mathematics. Leaders tackle equality of opportunity well, as is evident in the work of the Achievement Centre which provides highly effective and personalised intervention and support to reduce barriers to learning for all students and enables different groups of students to achieve well.

The governing body contains a wealth of expertise which is used both to support the school and also to challenge senior managers to further raise achievement. It meets its statutory duties and supports the school well in ensuring staff and students are safe, including in relation to child protection.

The school systematically and regularly reviews its curriculum and amends it to meet the different needs of groups of students. This flexibility contributes strongly to an outstanding broad and balanced curriculum personalised to each student, taking account of their interests, abilities and potential career opportunities. The school has arranged links with other secondary schools which allow it to offer an increased range of both vocational and academic courses at Key Stage 4 and sixth-form level which would not be viable in a single school. The curriculum promotes students' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development well. There is a very wide range of extracurricular activities with many effective examples including those to support

science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education and an internship programme for very able sixth form students.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



20 January 2012

Dear Students

Inspection of Framwellgate School Durham, Framwellgate Moor, DH1 5BQ

Thank you for being so welcoming when we came to inspect your school. We enjoyed talking with you and were pleased to be able to take your views into account. It was also very helpful that many of your parents and carers completed the questionnaire as we could also take account of their views. It is clear from the evidence that we collected that you enjoy being at school and feel well cared for by your teachers. You said that everyone is friendly and that there is a positive and supportive atmosphere in school. I thought you might like to know what we thought about your school.

- Framwellgate is a good school. The headteacher and senior leadership team are making the right improvements to help you achieve even more.
- The school provides you with a good education. You make good progress from your starting points when you join the school.
- You receive good teaching in lessons.
- The school provides you with good support, particularly those of you who need additional help.

To help the school improve further, we have said that senior leaders should further improve the quality of learning across the school by:

- sharing best practice in the school to further improve teaching, particularly in mathematics
- widening opportunities for students in the sixth form to work with each other and to work independently, and encouraging students to take a more leading role in their education
- improving the attendance of students.

You can help your teachers by continuing to behave well, working hard at all times and making every effort to attend school regularly. I wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

David Brown
Lead inspector

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