

The Freeston Business and Enterprise College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108295
Local Authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	356338
Inspection dates	17–18 November 2010
Reporting inspector	Katrina Gueli HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	989
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Ron Ayres
Headteacher	Dr Gillian Metcalfe
Date of previous school inspection	19 September 2007
School address	Favell Avenue Normanton West Yorkshire WF6 1HZ
Telephone number	01924 302560
Fax number	01924 302564
Email address	info@freestonbec.com

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Royal Exchange Buildings
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M2 7LA

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 31 lessons taught by 31 different teachers; visited one assembly and three morning tutorials; met with leaders and other staff, groups of students, the School Improvement Partner and representatives of the governing body. The team also scrutinised documents including data relating to students' current attainment and progress, minutes of meetings of the governing body, findings of the school's own monitoring and evaluation of provision and questionnaires from 93 parents and carers.

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

- The impact of the school's work to improve progress in mathematics and address differences in performance between other subjects and identifiable groups of students.
- The extent to which students' attitudes and behaviour support good learning.
- The effectiveness of teachers' use of assessment information to provide a good degree of challenge for all students.
- The contribution of all leaders to improving provision and outcomes for students.

Information about the school

The Freeston Business and Enterprise College is a full-service extended school of average size serving a community typified by mixed socio-economic circumstances on the east of Wakefield. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The percentage of students from minority ethnic groups is also below the national average and few of these students are at an early stage of English language acquisition. The proportion of students who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average although the percentage of students with a statement of special educational needs is below average. The school was successfully redesignated as a specialist college in January 2008 and has been recognised by the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust for the work it has done in supporting other Business and Enterprise Colleges. The school has gained the Artsmark silver and Healthy Schools awards and the Investors in People Quality Mark.

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

Since the last inspection there has been a significant rise in students' attainment and progress in many subjects is now good. This notable improvement has been brought about by the commitment and determination of leaders and staff to ensuring that students' needs are well met by the curriculum and that they receive good quality personal and academic support. In some subjects however, including English and mathematics, staffing changes and recruitment difficulties have led to students making more modest progress and attainment in these core subjects is broadly in line with the national average. In addition, despite the school's extensive efforts, boys' attainment lags behind that of girls to a greater extent than is seen nationally. Students' progress overall, although improving rapidly in many respects, is satisfactory from their broadly average starting points in Year 7.

Students' attendance is above average and they make good progress in developing their personal skills and qualities with the vast majority successfully progressing into education, employment or training. The school's extensive extra-curricular opportunities make a strong contribution to this good personal development, particularly those related to the business and enterprise specialism. Students are confident that staff will listen to their views if they have concerns and there is a strong community feel within the school helping to ensure students feel safe.

The majority of teaching is good but inspectors saw significant variation between the best and the least successful examples. Consequently, the quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Similarly, teachers' ability to make effective use of assessment strategies to support students' learning differs widely across the school. On a few occasions where students do not experience good or better teaching, a small minority, particularly boys, choose to behave in way that limits their learning.

Leaders are robust in their monitoring of the school's provision and outcomes for students with incisive evaluation used to identify improvement actions. Their coherent approach to supporting students at risk of underachievement, and in tackling weaknesses in teaching and the curriculum has resulted in improved outcomes in virtually all subjects and confirms the school's good capacity to improve further. Governors have a high profile in school and bring a broad range of skills and experience that enables them to provide a good balance of support and challenge for the school. Governors have ensured that all required policies and procedures are in place, including those to ensure the health and well-being of students. However, they have been less rigorous in monitoring the impact and effectiveness of policies once implemented.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure all students, particularly boys, make consistently good progress in all subjects, especially in English and mathematics by:
 - using existing good practice to increase the quality and consistency of teaching and the use of assessment information to support learning across the school
 - ensuring all teachers' plan lessons to meet the full range of students' learning needs and challenge them to work things out for themselves
 - making good use of assessment in all lessons to check students' understanding and adjust teaching where necessary
 - ensuring all students develop the necessary skills and attitudes to take responsibility for their own learning and behave well.
- Increase the rigour with which the governing body monitors and evaluates the impact of the school's policies and procedures.
- Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

The proportion of students gaining five or more A* to C grades at GCSE rose in 2010 from previously being below, to well above the national average. However, when English and mathematics are included, this figure is broadly in line with the national average. Students make particularly good progress in business studies, information and communication technology and art. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress and achieve well because the curriculum has been very carefully matched to their learning needs and they receive very effective support to ensure any potential barriers to their learning are removed. In lessons, students enjoy opportunities to work in groups and to discuss their ideas, showing high levels of motivation when activities are thoughtfully chosen to match their ability and interests. However, in a minority of lessons students are passive or reluctant to engage with the tasks set and consequently their progress is more limited. While the majority of students behave well in lessons and around school a small but significant minority do not meet the school's high expectations in terms of behaviour and fixed-term exclusions, although reducing, remain higher than typically seen.

Students have a good understanding of how to adopt a healthy lifestyle and this is reflected in their good levels of involvement in the wide range of sporting and cultural activities that the school provides. The majority of students are involved in contributing to their school and wider community through charity fund raising and by taking on responsibilities as school and peer counsellors, and sports leaders. For example, students' views were used extensively to inform the development of a new behaviour policy, summer uniform changes and subject area refurbishments. The curriculum provides students with very extensive opportunities to develop their enterprise capability through running small businesses and entering school-based 'Apprentice' style competitions, which prepares them well for their future lives.

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

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Where teaching is good or better it is typified by: thorough planning that builds upon students' prior learning; high teacher expectations which are reflected in challenging activities that engage students effectively and; strong teacher subject knowledge which is used to place the learning in a relevant context. There is also a sharp focus on the development of students' transferable skills in addition to securing progress in their knowledge and understanding, reflecting the positive impact of the school's specialism. However, despite much good and some exemplary teaching in the school too many lessons still do not consistently feature the key ingredients needed to ensure students make good progress. Most often, work is not well matched to the learning needs of individuals or groups and teachers limit the opportunities for students to work things out for themselves. Consequently, students are not productive and some become disengaged. There is a similar polarity in the effectiveness with which teachers' use assessment information to support students' progress. In some lessons seen, assessment was at the heart of ensuring students understood the intended learning, as they were actively involved in assessing their own progress so they could identify how to improve their work. In stark contrast for example, teachers in some lessons made minimal efforts to check whether students' understood a particular idea or concept before moving learning on. The quality of feedback to students also varies significantly between departments and, while students may be aware of their current level of attainment, they do not always understand how to take the next steps in their learning.

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The curriculum has been extensively developed to provide a range of pathways and cross-curricular programmes at both key stages to match students' needs and aspirations well. This improved curriculum has been a key element in the recent rise in students' attainment, their improved progress and their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. All departments are offering a range of different courses and students are carefully guided to selecting suitable options. The school also has a number of good partnerships that are used effectively to extend and enhance curriculum provision including extensive business links, and contacts with the Fire Service and the local further education college. Business and enterprise projects during the summer term support the transition to Year 7 and help students to settle quickly into their new school.

The school provides a caring and supportive environment for all students, who are well known to staff as individuals. For example, student services provide a valued drop-in point to help students with a wide variety of issues on a day-to-day basis. A key strength is the effectiveness of leaders in providing multi-layered support and intervention for those students who have the most complex needs. Partnerships with external agencies and parents or carers are well used with appropriate information being shared in a coherent and timely manner. Students with additional needs also receive carefully tailored support at key transition points including prior to joining at the start of Year 7 or if they are transferring into the school at a later time. The effectiveness of action taken to improve outcomes is clearly evidenced in the improving rates of attendance. However, it is too soon to see the full impact of some programmes designed to help students take more responsibility for their own behaviour.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders have set a clear direction for the school. All staff understand their role in contributing to the school's continued development by 'making the difference' to the aspirations and life chances of the young people that the school serves. Leaders have found creative and innovative ways to develop provision that are having a marked impact on improving student outcomes. Systems to track students' progress are rigorous and there is a coherent approach to tackling identified underperformance with 'house' and departmental leaders working closely together to help students to get back on track. The school is looking carefully at the performance of difference groups and employs a range of strategies to try and ensure that all students can achieve well. The development plan highlights appropriate priorities for improvement and the school has carefully evaluated the progress and impact of actions taken to identify the next steps needed for further improvement. Partnerships with parents are good and the school has improved

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communication in response to the parental feedback it received. Parents are well informed about their children's progress through regular reporting and a wide range of events including 'settling-in' evenings, Year 9 option-choice clinics and parent workshops prior to GCSE revision. Partnerships, the curriculum and the school's specialism are ensuring that the school is promoting community cohesion well. The school has suitable policies and procedures in place to safeguard students with good attention to paid to staff training and to ensuring there are effective safe recruitment and child protection procedures.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Views of parents and carers

The response rate was slightly lower than typically seen in secondary schools but the overwhelming majority of parents and carers felt that their children enjoyed school. Most were confident that the school met their children's needs and that they were well prepared for the future. Inspectors agree that these are strengths of the school's provision. A few parents and carers did not feel that the school keeps their child safe but inspectors found that students feel safe in school and that the school takes the necessary steps to ensure their safety and well-being. However, a very small minority of students did highlight that when they choose to go off-site for lunch they occasionally had concerns about their welfare.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Freeston Business and Enterprise College 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 93 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 989 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	26	28	61	66	5	5	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	23	25	55	59	10	11	1	1
My school informs me about my child's progress	21	23	54	58	12	13	2	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	30	32	48	52	9	10	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	26	28	52	56	5	5	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	14	15	54	58	12	13	3	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	10	11	64	69	12	13	1	1
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)	28	30	49	53	4	4	2	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	24	26	55	59	8	9	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	23	25	46	49	8	9	7	8
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	10	11	52	56	12	13	2	2
The school is led and managed effectively	27	29	52	56	5	5	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	35	38	47	51	8	9	1	1

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 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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



19 November 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of The Freeston Business and Enterprise College, Normanton, WF6 1HZ

You may remember that I recently visited your school with a team of inspectors. We would like to thank you for the time you took to talk to us both in meetings and during lessons.

Inspectors found that there has been significant improvement in the school since the last inspection and that you are now making good progress in many of your subjects. Your above-average attendance, the good curriculum offered and the good care, guidance and support that you receive are key elements that have helped many more of you to achieve five A* to C grades at GCSE. However, inspectors highlighted that for your progress to be good overall, you need still need to be making better progress in a few subjects, including English and mathematics.

Inspectors found that quality of teaching and the use of assessment information varies across the school. We have asked the school's leaders to make sure all teaching and teachers' use of data from assessments to support your learning is of better quality. While the large majority of you consistently demonstrate good attitudes to learning, a small minority of you do not choose to behave well in all lessons and this slows your progress. Many of you make a good contribution to the school and wider community through taking on leadership roles and getting involved in fund raising activities. Opportunities that arise through school's business and enterprise specialism play a significant part in your good personal development, particularly in ensuring you are well prepared for progressing into further education, employment or training. The school is well led and inspectors judged that the school has a good capacity to improve further.

We hope you will continue to play your part in supporting the school's development.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Katrina Gueli

Her Majesty's Inspector

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