

The Frances Bardsley School for Girls

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102351
Local Authority	Havering
Inspection number	376704
Inspection dates	13–14 October 2011
Reporting inspector	Liz Duffy

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Girls
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	1303
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	208
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev R S P Hingley
Headteacher	Mr J Dutnall
Date of previous school inspection	29–30 September 2008
School address	Brentwood Road Romford RM1 2RR
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Age group	11–18
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by five additional inspectors. They observed 38 lessons taught by 37 teachers covering the full age and ability range of the school. At the time of the inspection Year 11 students were undertaking work experience off site. The inspectors met with the staff, governors and students. They observed the school's work, and looked at a wide range of data and documentation, including the school improvement plan, school policies, assessment data and minutes of governing body meetings. The responses to questionnaires completed by staff, students and 216 parents and carers were also analysed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The progress of less-able girls in all subjects and the progress of all girls in mathematics.
- How well teachers use target setting, assessment and marking so that students know how to improve.
- The effectiveness of leaders' monitoring and evaluation.
- The extent to which sixth-form provision meets students' needs and supports achievement in preparation for future life.

Information about the school

The Frances Bardsley School for Girls is a larger-than-average secondary school with an increasing sixth form. A large majority of students are of White British heritage. The percentage of students from minority ethnic groups is above average with students of Black African heritage forming a sixth of the student population. A few students speak English as an additional language. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with statements of special educational needs, is well below average. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is lower than the national average. The school has the Healthy Schools Award. A new headteacher was appointed in September 2011. Prior to his appointment there had been a significant change in the roles and responsibilities of the senior leadership team.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Students enjoy attending The Frances Bardsley School for Girls where they receive a good standard of education. Students enter the school with attainment that is above average and leave Year 11 with high performance in a large majority of subjects, including English and mathematics. Overall, students make good progress across all subjects. This is supported by above-average attendance. Students who enter Year 7 with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress due to the good support they receive. Progress is satisfactory in the sixth form where attainment has fallen over the past three years mainly due to a rapidly increasing intake and an inclusive general studies policy.

Key strengths are students' spiritual awareness, the celebration of cultural diversity that is represented in the school and students' contribution to the community. With regards to the latter, a wide range of activities is undertaken by students in all year groups and this is supported by a good curriculum. For example, girls benefit from the Sports Leader Award where they coach pupils from primary schools. Less extensive is the range of partnerships in the sixth form where joint collaboration with other post-16 providers is insufficient.

The school's aim is to instil a love of learning and this is achieved in most lessons where students are energised, challenged by difficult material and enthusiastic to take part in a range of activities. During the inspection the majority of lessons were judged to be good or better. Occasionally, students are set tasks that are not well matched to their ability, and criteria on how to achieve well are not shared. As a result, students can sometimes go off task and chatter, do not understand why they are learning or how they can improve. Most of the time students behave well although care for their communal areas is not as strong. Students appreciate the care, guidance and support they receive which is good.

The new headteacher has a strong vision and his staff are excited about the future for the school. The changeover of roles in the senior team has not been thoroughly embedded and, as a result, there is some leadership in important areas that is not secure. The governing body's picture of achievement and areas for improvement is satisfactory but limited. Some policies are not well embedded and some lack clear procedures for evaluation. As a result, the effectiveness of leadership at all levels in embedding ambition and driving improvement is currently satisfactory. Although the school has improved attainment and progress in the main school since the previous inspection, there has been a decline in sixth form attainment. A pattern of

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improvement in leadership and management is being established. However, target setting and strategies for monitoring and evaluation are not yet fully embedded and post-16 collaboration is limited. Therefore, the school currently demonstrates a satisfactory capacity to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the rigour with which leaders monitor and evaluate in order to:
 - provide sharper challenge from governors
 - provide an even more effective overview of the performance of the school
 - ensure policies are implemented, embedded and reviewed
 - help teachers to use data and assessment more effectively to inform their planning so they can provide more incisive challenge for every learner.

- Raise students' attainment in the sixth form by:
 - improving the quality of lesson planning, in particular for the more able
 - developing wider links with other schools and providers so there is a greater range of cost-effective courses where students benefit from larger teaching groups and balanced learning experiences.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**1**

Results have remained high for the past three years, including in English and mathematics. The school has improved its percentage of A* to C grades at GCSE, although in 2011 the subjects of German, graphics and physical education did not perform as well. Standards attained in current class work are particularly impressive in English, French, drama and history. In these subjects students made outstanding progress in most of the lessons observed. Extended writing when produced was imaginative, well organised and sophisticated. Overall students make good progress in their lessons. Timely intervention and good support ensure that students with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress and perform better than similar students nationally. The few students who speak English as an additional language make good progress. However, girls who enter Year 7 with standards below the national average and White British girls from low socio-economic backgrounds are making less progress than other groups.

The students confirm that they feel safe in and around the school and that any incidents of bullying and harassment are dealt with effectively. Where students are engaged in lessons and enjoy their learning, behaviour is good and exclusions have decreased from previous years. During the inspection behaviour in assemblies was outstanding. Students benefit from a range of healthy food in the canteen and numbers participating in sporting activities are high. The school is in receipt of the Healthy Schools award. The school council is fully involved in school life and appreciates the new headteacher who students think is very supportive and has given the group 'an open voice'. Preparation for future life and students' economic well-being is good.

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The students’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Particularly impressive are their thoughtful understanding of global issues and their awareness of spiritual ideas. For example, in tutor time there was an excellent debate of Cicero’s ‘Gratitude is not only the greatest of virtues but the parent of all others’. Students have a strong sense of citizenship and this is evident in their very extensive contribution to the local community. Students have designed a garden, for example, from which they have grown and cooked vegetables to feed older people locally.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment ¹	1
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
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils’ behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
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	1

How effective is the provision?

During the inspection outstanding lessons were characterised by excellent engagement and lively debate; for example, in two outstanding English lessons there was thoughtful analysis of the presentation of Dracula as a character and a highly entertaining treatment of the media and its influence on education. In other highly effective lessons, students were told explicitly what they had to include in their responses to get high grades and teachers altered tasks according to individuals’ needs. In a few lessons, teachers spoke for too long and limited the opportunity for students’ contributions. In a minority of lessons, students were not challenged enough for their abilities. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities benefit from good support provided by the learning support assistants. The ‘Life Centre’ is effective in helping girls to reintegrate into lessons after prolonged absence. The individual care and attention given to girls by the year leaders is a strength of provision.

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

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Students know their numerical targets and some are able to say what their next steps for improvement are. Written guidance in exercise books is not always precise enough to be helpful. The curriculum very effectively supports the high achievement of students through providing a variety of pathways, such as the Young Apprenticeship and Diploma Group and through a high take-up of extra-curricular opportunities. White British students from low socio-economic backgrounds are satisfactorily supported but sometimes lack opportunities from customised enterprise and work-related activities.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
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?

The impact of leaders is rapidly improving. The governing body is actively involved in the provision of enrichment activities and the challenge it provides in relation to school performance is currently satisfactory. Safeguarding is satisfactory and fulfils all statutory requirements. The school utilises well its links with external agencies to safeguard students' welfare. Evaluation of the safeguarding policy and that of community cohesion is improving but historically there has not been a strong enough link to the school improvement plan. A strength of the school's promotion of community cohesion is its engagement with a range of community groups which benefit the school as well as the local community, such as the various counselling services that are offered on site as well as the cultural opportunities provided by the Visual Arts Centre.

Students appreciate the diversity of their student population and benefit from a school that is inclusive in its ethos and has a number of international links. The school promotes cultural equality of opportunity successfully; however, a small minority of subject leaders do not place enough emphasis upon tracking the progression of certain groups of students. Nevertheless, student equality is promoted satisfactorily and there is no evidence of any discrimination.

The new headteacher has communicated well with staff so that they feel listened to and have ownership of the vision for the school; there is a strong belief that the school 'will go from strength to strength'.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
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	1

Sixth form

Outcomes in the sixth form are satisfactory. The sixth form has increased by over half over the past three years with an increasing range of prior attainment. In lessons and in their current work, students make the progress expected of them. In some subjects better progress is made, for example in history, information and communication technology and drama. In these lessons students benefit from enthusiastic delivery which is accompanied by strong subject knowledge, close reference to examination grade criteria and helpful guidance on how to improve. Less effective lessons are planned poorly and tasks do not meet the individual needs of students; in particular, there is a lack of challenge for the more able. The curriculum broadly matches the abilities of the students. Some group sizes are very small and although there are advantages, these do not always give students a sufficiently balanced learning experience.

Students value the support they receive from staff and enjoy taking part in a range of trips and visits that contribute to their independent learning. Students appreciate the leadership roles available to them, such as school ambassadorship and prefectship. Contact with younger students through mentoring programmes is not as well developed. Leadership and management are satisfactory. An area under review is to develop the use of data to inform strategic planning. Evaluation of teaching and learning by sixth-form leaders although satisfactory is underdeveloped. Consequently, it does not always maximise students’ opportunities to progress successfully to higher education or employment.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	3
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Taking into account: Outcomes for students in the sixth form	3
The quality of provision in the sixth form	3
Leadership and management of the sixth form	3

Views of parents and carers

The Ofsted questionnaire was returned by a very small minority of parents and carers. Of those that responded, most parents and carers feel that their child enjoys school, that their child feels safe and that teaching is good at the school. Several new Year 7 parents and carers commented on how well their girls had settled in. One commented: 'My daughter is thoroughly enjoying school and has had a very positive experience to date.' A few parents and carers who responded would like more information on their child's progress and a small minority would like more support with helping their child to learn. Inspectors found that the school is working to improve these aspects which are currently judged as satisfactory.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Frances Bardsley School for Girls 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 216 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1303 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	102	47	100	46	8	4	1	0
The school keeps my child safe	115	53	92	43	4	2	1	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	60	28	108	50	28	13	3	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	73	34	105	49	9	4	5	2
The teaching is good at this school	61	28	129	60	7	3	1	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	42	19	108	50	41	19	6	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	55	25	119	55	25	12	3	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)	60	28	110	51	10	5	10	5
The school meets my child’s particular needs	65	30	117	54	14	6	3	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	63	29	108	50	17	8	7	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	43	20	100	46	25	12	2	1
The school is led and managed effectively	63	29	110	51	8	4	3	1
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	103	48	96	44	9	4	2	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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 2010 to 08 April 2011 and 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.

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

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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.



17 October 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of The Frances Bardsley School for Girls, Romford RM1 2RR

On behalf of the inspection team, I am writing to thank you for your warm welcome when we visited your school recently and to tell you about our findings during the inspection. We concluded that your school provides a good level of education. Most of you agreed in the questionnaire that you learn a lot in lessons. Examination results are high in comparison with national standards and most of you make better than expected progress. Some aspects of your school are outstanding, for example the way in which you contribute to your local and global communities. We saw plenty of you enjoying your lessons and we were pleased to hear that you are happy at school.

Your new headteacher has plans to improve the school further. We identified two main areas that should help him with this:

- Improve the way in which leaders monitor and evaluate performance and provision so that your learning needs are addressed more effectively in lessons.
- Raise standards in the sixth form.

We wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Liz Duffy
Lead inspector

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