

# Frome Community College

Bath Road, Frome, Somerset, BA11 2HQ

## Inspection dates

23–24 October 2012

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Inadequate</b>	<b>4</b>
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that has serious weaknesses.

- Students overall, and boys in particular, are making inadequate progress, including in developing literacy and numeracy skills, because of weaknesses in teaching over time. As a result, standards have gone down since the last inspection.
- Teaching is inadequate because there has been too little training for staff. Not all teachers are skilled in checking students' progress during the lesson and adapting their teaching so that each student makes as much progress as possible and no time is wasted. Teachers do not all help students to improve their work through giving written feedback.
- Behaviour requires improvement to make it good. Students, and boys in particular, do not behave consistently well in all lessons because some lessons are not hard enough and do not engage and interest them.
- The leadership and management of teaching and learning require improvement to make them good. Not all leaders and managers are skilled in checking on teachers and helping them to improve to make sure the progress their students make is good enough. The good practice in some lessons is not shared across the college.

### The school has the following strengths

- Disabled students and those with special educational needs, including those who receive alternative provision, make good and often outstanding progress. This is because their progress is checked regularly and their individual needs are met in lessons given by specialist teachers.
- In the sixth form, students' results and progress have improved. Students have more challenging targets and good quality feedback from teachers helps them to know how to improve their work. However, the sixth form still requires improvement to be good.
- Students say that they feel safe in the college, that bullying is not frequent and, when it does occur, staff deal with it effectively.
- Leaders and managers are successfully tackling long-term underachievement in mathematics, although students' progress is not yet as good as it should be.
- The new principal has inspired all staff to develop their skills and has raised their morale. He is being supported effectively by a National Leader of Education.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed 44 lessons taught by 44 teachers, some of which were observed jointly with members of the college’s senior leadership team. In addition, inspectors carried out shorter visits to several lessons, visited the specialist provision for disabled students and those who have special educational needs and heard small groups of students reading.
- Inspectors held meetings with five groups of students, a small group of parents, the Chair and two other members of the Governing Body, and two representatives from the local authority. They also met with college staff, including senior and middle leaders, and the head of a local specialist autism unit which is used by the college to support a small minority of students. There are currently no other students being educated off site.
- Inspectors observed the college’s work and examined a range of documents, including the college’s checking of students’ progress, the quality of teaching and students’ behaviour and attendance. Inspectors evaluated systems for managing the performance and development of staff, the college’s improvement plans and documents relating to the safeguarding of children.
- Inspectors took account of the 51 responses to Ofsted’s on-line Parent View survey and questionnaires completed by 53 members of staff.

## Inspection team

Sue Frater, Lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Matthew Haynes

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Richard Boswell

Additional Inspector

Lynne Kauffman

Additional Inspector

Anne Looney

Additional Inspector

## Full report

*In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.*

### Information about this college

- The principal has been in post since September 2012.
- The college is larger than most secondary schools.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium is similar to that found in most schools. The pupil premium is additional government funding for schools to support students who are known to be eligible for free school meals, who are looked after by the local authority or are children of families in the services.
- The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is below average, as is the proportion of students who speak English as an additional language.
- Staff have identified a below-average proportion of students who have a disability or have special educational needs. This group has extra support through 'school action'. A below average proportion of students have a statement of special educational needs or are supported by 'school action plus'.
- The college has a specially resourced classroom (alternative provision) for students with special educational needs. This is a resource base for students with language and communication difficulties.
- The college makes provision for a few pupils to attend the Park Road Support Centre. There are currently no other students attending any off-site provision.
- Few students start or leave the college at times other than at the transition from middle school into Year 9 and at transition into the sixth form.
- The college currently meets the government's floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

### What does the college need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching, so that it is at least good, by:
  - ensuring all teachers check students' progress during lessons and adapt their teaching if needed so that each student makes as much progress as possible and that no time is wasted
  - making sure that all teachers inform students how to improve their work through written feedback.
- Raise achievement for students overall, and especially for boys, by developing students' literacy and numeracy skills across all subjects.
- Make sure that students, and boys in particular, behave consistently well in all lessons through teaching that engages, challenges and interests them. Share the good practice that exists in the college and in the partner school.
- Improve the leadership and management of teaching and learning by developing the skills of all leaders and managers in:
  - checking the quality of teaching
  - coaching teachers about how to improve
  - taking action with teachers where the progress their pupils make is not good enough.
- An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of

leadership and governance may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of students

### is inadequate

- Students consistently make less than expected progress because of weaknesses in teaching. Attainment on entry to the college in Year 9 is broadly average. Over the past three years attainment at GCSE, including English and mathematics, has been below average. Boys, particularly those with low and middle attainment when they started at the school, make significantly less progress than girls and all students nationally as too many lessons fail to engage them.
- Students' learning and progress in English are broadly average, but over time in mathematics have been inadequate. Improvements in the teaching of mathematics are raising students' achievement, although it is not yet as good as it should be.
- Students' limited progress in developing numeracy and literacy skills, particularly reading skills, is a barrier to their further progress across subjects, including science and humanities. Students are not reading widely or developing literacy and numeracy skills consistently enough across all subjects to raise standards and to enable them to succeed in the next stage of education, training or employment.
- Achievement in the sixth form has improved and attainment is now broadly average. Leaders and managers are aware of the need to deal with remaining inconsistencies across subjects to secure good progress for all students.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs, including those who receive alternative provision, make good and often outstanding progress. Detailed checks identify the specific needs of each individual. Teaching by special needs teachers and support programmes meet the students' specific needs very effectively.
- The few students who speak English as an additional language achieve well because the college also makes good provision for their specific needs.
- The few students who attend off-site alternative provision at the specialist autism unit make good progress because the teaching meets their specific needs well.
- Children who are looked after, and students known to be eligible for free school meals, including those who are eligible for support from the pupil premium, achieve as well as similar groups nationally. However, they achieve less well than all other students in the college. Their average points score at GCSE is 36.3 points below the average for all other students, which is almost another GCSE. Leaders and managers are aware of the need to target the pupil premium funding more specifically to the needs of these students. Currently, they are using it to provide general catch-up sessions in English and mathematics, and it is not having enough impact on the specific pupils eligible for the funding.

### The quality of teaching

### is inadequate

- Weaknesses in teaching over time have resulted in students making inadequate progress. There has been too little training to enable teachers to keep up to date with current best practice. Not all teachers are skilled in checking the progress of individuals and groups during lessons and adapting their teaching to be sure it is at the right level for the different abilities of students. Teachers are not judging when students have understood the lesson and then moving them on to the next stage quickly enough.
- Literacy and numeracy skills are not being taught across all subjects. In some of the lessons observed, students, and boys in particular, were struggling to read the tasks but the teachers did not have strategies to support them. This limits students' ability to learn independently, as in researching, problem solving, investigating, discussing and presenting their findings.
- Not all teachers have sufficiently high expectations of what students could do, and teaching in some lessons fails to engage, interest and challenge students, particularly boys.
- Students say that they enjoy lessons such as religion and philosophy which engage them in

discussing spiritual and moral issues, encourage them to work together in developing social skills and develop their understanding of their own and other cultures. Not all lessons contribute to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

- Where the teaching in mathematics has been improved, students were seen to be engaged in a series of short activities which led them quickly to the intended learning, such as in problem solving in a Year 9 lesson on square roots. Students' learning was reinforced when they explained Pythagoras' theory in group discussion and through the presentation of posters, thus applying and developing their literacy and numeracy skills. The teacher checked their progress, gave further support where needed and asked probing questions to extend the understanding of those who were ready to move on. Homework provided a further opportunity for students to consolidate their learning and to apply their new skills.
- The specialist teaching of disabled students and those who have special educational needs, including those who attend alternative provision, is highly effective. This is because the teachers constantly assess each student's progress and adjust their teaching to help them learn better. In the most effective lessons, teaching assistants are used well to support disabled students and those with special educational needs. They question the students to encourage them to think independently. In a very few lessons, teaching assistants are given too little direction to know what they need to do to promote the students' good progress.
- Teaching in the sixth form has improved because individual students now have more challenging targets and more detailed feedback from teachers on how they can improve their work.
- Across the college, students know their target grades for each subject. They do not always know how to improve their work because the quality of marking and feedback is not consistently good across and within subjects, even in mathematics.
- Parent View indicates that most parents and carers are satisfied with the teaching their children receive, although some do not feel they get enough information on their children's progress. Parents and carers who met with inspectors were generally positive, particularly about the support for disabled students and those who have special educational needs. However, they felt that the progress of their children in Year 9 did not build on their progress in Year 8. Information from the local authority showed that this was the case. Inspectors found that the quality of teaching over time has led to inadequate progress for students overall.

## The behaviour and safety of students

## requires improvement

- Not all students have consistently positive attitudes to learning. Some students, particularly boys, disrupt a small number of lessons that fail to engage them by talking rather than focusing on their work. In other lessons that fail to engage, students are passive and do not make the effort they should.
- Students say that teachers are not consistent in the way that they manage behaviour. However, they say that in most lessons and around the college, behaviour is mainly good. Inspectors agree, and found that there are few concerns expressed by parents and carers, staff and students about behaviour.
- Relationships between staff and students, and between students themselves, are typically positive and students display good manners.
- Behaviour is monitored carefully and the college is effective in helping students with poor behaviour to manage it. The number of students excluded from school is below the national average.
- The off-site provision in the specialist autism unit is also effective. The college monitors students' attendance, behaviour and progress at the unit and students are kept safe there at all times.
- Students say that they feel safe in school, and parents and carers agree. Students are aware of risks and different kinds of bullying, including cyber, disability, racist and homophobic bullying, and how to keep themselves safe. They are confident that staff will address any concerns. Bullying of any kind is infrequent and, when it does occur, it is identified and addressed

effectively.

- Attendance is broadly average and students are punctual to college and to lessons.

## **The leadership and management requires improvement**

- Leadership and management of teaching and learning require improvement to be good. There has been too little staff development over time to raise standards. The examples of good practice in the college have not been shared across all subjects. Not all year group and subject leaders and managers are good at monitoring, coaching and holding teachers to account for the progress their students make. However, the new principal and senior leaders and managers are demonstrating the capacity to secure improvement in the college.
- The principal, ably supported by his senior leadership team, has inspired staff to improve teaching and learning. As a result, teachers are attending training or visiting other schools to see best practice. The principal is raising the staff's expectations of what students can achieve through more challenging targets and rigorous checking of the progress of all groups of learners.
- Staff questionnaires were full of praise for the new principal and his positive approach. Typical comments include, 'There is a much clearer sense of direction', and refer to 'an increased sense of purpose and momentum.' The whole school community, including the governing body, has signed up to his vision of this being an outstanding college by 2020.
- There is a track record of improvement in the college over the past year. These improvements include the now strong and effective leadership and management of teaching and learning for disabled students and those with special educational needs, including in alternative provision, and those who speak English as an additional language. Effective systems are in place to promote students' attendance and behaviour, although not all teachers are implementing them consistently. Examination results for 2012 indicate improvements in teaching and learning in mathematics and in the sixth form.
- Senior leaders have an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses in the college through monitoring lessons and students' work. The management of staff's performance and the appraisal of staff are being reviewed to reflect the Teachers' Standards (these are things teachers should do which are nationally defined). Staff who are not performing well enough do not pass the threshold to the higher pay scale. Year group and subject leaders contribute to performance management, but they are not all effective and so inconsistencies in teaching remain. The principal is currently restructuring leadership in the college.
- The organisation of subjects and courses is reviewed regularly. It meets the needs of identified groups of students and those in the sixth form. Students' progress is not limited by early entry to GCSE examinations. A wide range of well-attended extra-curricular provision promotes students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well, but provision in lessons is too inconsistent.
- Leaders and managers are aware that weaknesses in numeracy and literacy, especially reading skills, are a barrier to students' progress across subjects. However, support is only available for disabled students and those with special educational needs. There is no whole-college approach to tackling the issues.
- Responses to Parent View indicate that parents have confidence in the leadership and management of the school.
- The local authority acknowledges that its support was not followed through by previous leaders to bring about sustained improvement. It has made arrangements for the college to be supported by a National Leader of Education. Staff have already benefited by observing outstanding teaching in his school.
- **The governance of the college**
  - Governors have an accurate understanding of the college's strengths and weaknesses in teaching. They hold senior leaders to account for all aspects of the college's performance. The governing body was instrumental in securing the change of leadership through performance

management. Governors have attended a range of training. This has enabled them to fulfil all statutory requirements, including those for safeguarding students. Governance ensures financial stability through the efficient management of resources, although not always to best effect, as in the use of the pupil premium funding.



## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	123862
<b>Local authority</b>	Somerset
<b>Inspection number</b>	402206

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	13–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1,262
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	380
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Graham Lock
<b>Principal</b>	Gavin Ball
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	23–24 September 2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	01373 465353
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