

Frederick Bremer School

Siddeley Road, Walthamstow, London, E17 4EY

Inspection dates 25–26 September 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because:

- GCSE results are below the national average and there has been no overall trend of improvement in recent years.
- While students make good progress in some subjects, for example in mathematics, in other subjects progress is not yet rapid enough.
- Although teaching is improving and some is good or outstanding, there is still too much teaching that requires improvement.
- More-able students do not achieve as well as they should in some subjects.
- Leaders and managers are implementing several new initiatives which show promise. These are not yet fully embedded so that sustained impact over time is not yet demonstrated.

The school has the following strengths

- The vision and drive of the new headteacher and other leaders has rapidly brought about considerable improvements in teaching and in the curriculum. Consequently students' progress is also now improving rapidly.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs make good progress because of very good support and care.
- Governance has been strengthened and is now good.
- The school is a harmonious community. Students show respect for each other and for their teachers and they work and play happily together. Students and teachers are proud of their school.
- Students attend regularly, feel safe in school and behave well.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 46 part lessons, 32 jointly with senior staff.
- They observed behaviour around the school and in the playground, visited the library and scrutinised students' work.
- They held meetings with the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, groups of staff, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority. Discussions took place with groups of students, both formally and informally.
- The inspection team scrutinised school documents, including the school's own evaluation of how well it is doing, the school development plan, information about the use of pupil premium funding, the school's teaching and learning observations and statistical information about students' achievement, attendance and exclusions.
- Inspectors considered 70 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in addition to a recent parental survey arranged by the school. They analysed 71 completed staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

Ann Short, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Brian Netto	Additional Inspector
Alastair McMeckan	Additional Inspector
Sue Cox	Additional Inspector
Jason Hughes	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is an average-sized secondary school.
- There are more boys than girls in the school.
- The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding for those known to be eligible for free school meals, looked after students and those from armed service families) is much higher than average. Currently there are two looked after students and no students from service families in the school.
- A number of Year 7 students are eligible for catch-up funding which is used for students who did not attain level 4 in English or mathematics at the end of primary school.
- The school is ethnically very diverse. A large proportion of the students come from minority ethnic groups. The largest groups are from White British, any other White, Pakistani, Black Caribbean and Black African backgrounds.
- More than half of the students are believed to speak English as an additional language.
- The proportions of disabled students and those with special educational needs who are supported at school action and at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs are higher than average.
- The school hosts an on-site provision for students with autism.
- At present two Year 11 students attend provision off-site, one at Waltham Forest College and one at DV8 College.
- The headteacher took up her post in September 2012.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for students' progress and attainment.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the proportion of good and better teaching by:
 - making sure that all teachers use information about students' progress and abilities to set tasks which are well matched to the different needs of the students so that they can all make good progress
 - improving the active participation of all students in lessons and encouraging them to work things out for themselves in order to deepen their understanding and knowledge
 - making sure that marking is consistently good across the school so that all teachers give students clear guidance about how to improve their work, and opportunities to read and respond to their comments.
- Raise achievement by:
 - ensuring that all teachers are held rigorously to account for the progress made by all students
 - sharing the good practice that there is in the school in providing challenge for the more-able students so that they can achieve well and make good progress in every subject
 - ensuring that the good strategies in place to raise standards of literacy are used consistently by all teachers

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- The majority of students join the school with attainment below the national average. In past years they have not made good enough progress to close the gap with other students. For example, results in the key measure of five or more A*-C grades including English and mathematics are lower than the national average and there has been no recent upward trend.
- Achievement varies too much across different subjects. Students have not made rapid enough progress in design and technology, engineering, music or geography. Last year not all students who have English as an additional language received the good quality support they needed. Consequently, they were not able to participate in all lessons as fully as they might and their progress slowed
- In English, although some students make good progress, the more-able students do not make as much progress as they should.
- Some groups of students, for example Black Caribbean students make less progress than their classmates.
- Information held by the school indicates that students currently in the school are now making better progress. The school has changed the curriculum so that more time is allocated to key subjects such as English, mathematics and science. It is no longer compulsory to study design and technology. The management of students who speak English as an additional language has been reorganised. The school works hard to improve their progress and early indicators are promising. However it is too soon to judge the impact of these changes on sustained achievement over a longer period
- Also, the school no longer enters students early for GCSE examinations in English and mathematics. A small group of students took statistics in Year 10 in 2013 but this practice has been stopped because students were not reaching their full potential.
- The school has used pupil premium funding well to close gaps between the achievement of those eligible for the funding and their classmates. The gap in overall GCSE grades for these students and others in the school is very small and in English and mathematics has closed to approximately half a grade.
- Year 7 students supported through the Year 7 catch-up premium make good progress in developing the English skills they need to help them to be successful.
- Students are encouraged to read widely and to develop a love of reading through a variety of activities and in a variety of subjects.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs make good progress because of the very good support and care that they receive. Students in the on-site provision for autism also make good progress and benefit from the strong links with the rest of the school.
- Students who speak English as an additional language usually make progress similar to their classmates and so requires improvement. Sometimes they would benefit from being set tasks which provide more support for their learning English so that they can fully participate in all lessons
- Although there are more boys than girls in the school, girls achieve slightly better than boys as is the national pattern.
- The school carefully monitors the progress of the very few students who take courses with an external provider so that they achieve well.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Teaching has improved significantly since the arrival of the new headteacher. Although there is now much teaching which is good or outstanding, it is not yet consistently good across the school.
- In too many lessons teaching still requires improvement. This is often because the tasks are not well enough matched to the different needs of the students.
- In some lessons students are not given enough challenge to work independently and think things out for themselves. This includes the more-able students who sometimes are not given enough opportunities to develop their thinking and understanding.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and they know the students well. Students and teachers show respect for each other so that students can learn in a secure and happy environment. In many lessons students are motivated by a variety of well-sequenced activities. For example, in a Year 9 drama lesson students were enthused by a very good balance of teacher-led, group and individual activities so that all made outstanding progress. In other lessons they are not as actively involved as they could be because the lessons are less well planned and students are less involved because the teachers spend too much time talking.
- Marking is not yet consistently good across the school and students do not always have the opportunity to respond to the marking and act on the advice. However, the quality of marking has improved since the previous inspection and in many lessons students are given clear and helpful advice on how to improve their learning.
- Some teachers use good strategies to support literacy development but opportunities are missed in other lessons. Students are encouraged to read aloud in class and to discuss in pairs but they sometimes are not comfortable about talking about their ideas at greater length and extending their thinking in this way.
- Many teachers use questioning well to check learning and in some lessons to make students think more deeply. Some teachers adapt their planning skilfully during the lesson to ensure that all students can learn well. In a few lessons teachers do not check learning and understanding well enough.
- Students are frequently asked to assess their own work or that of their classmates in order to understand how well they are learning and they usually do this sensibly and carefully.
- The consistent use of purposeful homework to support learning is improving and contributes to the progress students make. The new timetable in place since September provides opportunities for students to receive targeted support at the end of the school day. This is already helping students to learn more quickly.
- Additional adults in the classroom provide good support to students who find learning more difficult.
- The school has carefully reviewed the support provided to students who speak English as an additional language and new arrangements are now in place. A good start has been made but it is too soon to measure how well the new arrangements are helping these students to learn.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Students behave well in lessons and around the school. They have positive attitudes to learning and want to do well so that teachers waste very little time in managing behaviour. Students are polite and respectful towards each other and towards adults. When they are given the opportunity, they work well together in pairs and groups.
- The new behaviour policy helps to ensure that teachers have a consistent approach to managing behaviour and students are very clear what the expectations of the school are. They enjoy the variety of rewards for good attitudes to work and good behaviour.
- Students feel very safe in school. Parents and staff agree that the school is a safe place. They are taught how to keep themselves safe through assemblies and lessons.
- Although there are fewer girls than boys the girls feel respected and enjoy working and playing

with their classmates, boys and girls. They say that everyone is treated equally.

- Students say that bullying is rare. If instances occur they are dealt with quickly and effectively.
- The school provides good support to students who have difficulties in managing their own behaviour. As a result exclusions have reduced.
- The school has worked hard to improve attendance which is now similar to the national average. The proportion of students who miss too many days of school has been reduced. There are strong systems in place to ensure that this continues. Students usually arrive at their lessons on time and there are teachers in the corridors and social spaces to remind them to hurry on their way.

The leadership and management are good

- The vision and determination of the new headteacher has brought about significant improvements in teaching and in leadership and management since she took up her post last September. She is ably supported by a strong new senior leadership team. The improvements are not yet reflected in external examinations. However, lesson observations and scrutiny of the information held by the school about the progress made by students confirm that achievement is improving.
- Staff and students describe with enthusiasm the recent improvements in the school and express their confidence in the headteacher and the leadership team. The many changes in the last year have been well managed so that the strong sense of community in the school has been strengthened. One group of older students explained how the senior leadership team have 'transformed the school'. Students are clear that their opinions are listened to and that they now make an important contribution to the development of the school.
- Leaders have rightly focused sharply on improving teaching in the school and now rigorously, regularly and accurately check the quality of teaching and learning. Teachers have been well supported to improve their teaching through a programme of focused professional development. The skills of leaders with particular responsibilities have been developed to strengthen their contributions to this programme. As a result there has been a significant rise in the proportion of teaching which is good or better. The school recognises that more needs to be done. The school now has effective systems for checking students' progress in all year groups. Leaders analyse the information they receive so that action can be taken quickly when students fall behind.
- Senior leaders have an accurate understanding of the work of the school. They have clearly identified the priorities for improvement and taken decisive action to address these.
- Performance management is now more rigorous than it has been in the past. Targets are more demanding, staff are being better held to account and the links to salary progression are clear.
- The new curriculum implemented from September is now broad, balanced and inclusive but agreed literacy strategies are not consistently implemented. Students appreciate the extra classes at the end of the school day which are matched to their particular needs and interests. The many additional sporting and cultural activities available contribute to the good social, moral, cultural and spiritual development of the students.
- The school works well with parents to involve them in the learning of their children. Attendance at information and consultation evenings is usually very good. The vast majority of parents report that their children are happy and making good progress at school, and that they would recommend the school to another parent.
- The school promotes equal opportunities for all students by analysing the progress of different groups of students and providing additional support for those who need it. Students are very clear that they are all treated equally.
- The local authority is working with the school in the drive to improve teaching. The authority has confidence in the ability of the leadership to make the necessary further improvements. The school has also developed links with other schools to support the professional development of teachers.
- Safeguarding meets statutory requirements including taking all reasonable steps for students attending off-site provision.

The governance of the school:

- Governance has strengthened and is now good. Governors know the strengths and weaknesses of the school well. They are given detailed, accurate information by the headteacher about the school's performance and about the quality of teaching. They use information about students' achievement to judge how well the school is doing. They have reviewed the impact of what they do and made changes to the way that they work and taken part in training so that they can provide more effective challenge to the school. They understand the links between the new rigorous appraisal of staff and how this is being used to make decisions about salary progression. They monitor the effective use of resources, including the funding allocated for students eligible for the pupil premium.

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

Unique reference number	103094
Local authority	Waltham Forest
Inspection number	425567

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	884
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Malcolm Howard
Headteacher	Jenny Smith
Date of previous school inspection	25–26 January 2012
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