

Sir Thomas Fremantle School

Park Road, Winslow, MK18 3DL

Inspection dates 6–7 May 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Senior leaders have high standards of how well students should behave and how hard they should work. They lead by example and rigorously ensure their high standards are met.
- Students display outstanding levels of courtesy towards each other and the school’s staff. Bullying and disruptive behaviour are extremely rare.
- Students make good progress in English and science. They make very good progress in mathematics, modern foreign languages and history.
- Leaders ensure disadvantaged students are well supported and, as a result, they achieve as well as other students in the school.
- Teaching is typically good and some is outstanding. Students take pleasure in their learning. Teachers question students effectively.
- High quality additional activities contribute positively to students’ social, spiritual, moral and cultural education. Fundamental British values are promoted effectively through these activities.
- The school is highly inclusive and students who join the school with special educational needs or disabilities settle in well and make good progress in most subjects.
- Safety is outstanding. Leaders and governors rigorously monitor students’ safety in the areas of the school used by the adult education service.
- Governors set high standards for the school. They ask leaders challenging questions and work closely with them to ensure students are safe.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Subject leaders do not make a big enough contribution to improving teaching and students’ achievement.
- In some lessons, the most able students are not sufficiently challenged.
- While teachers’ detailed marking and feedback are good, students are not always required to make the necessary improvements to their work.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 20 lessons, eight of which were carried out jointly with senior leaders. Every teacher in the school who was present was observed. Inspectors made further short visits to lessons on two occasions, on the first occasion to observe behaviour and on the second to look at literacy.
- Inspectors looked both at students' work in lessons, and also at a separate sample of students' books.
- Inspectors talked with students informally and met two groups of students formally on separate occasions. Students guided inspectors around the school at lunchtime.
- A range of the school's documentation was scrutinised closely, including information about students' achievement, the school's evaluations of its performance, the school improvement plan, minutes of governing body meetings, a wide range of policies and the school's arrangements to keep students safe.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders, all subject leaders, a group of staff, and governors, including the Chair of Governors. A phone call was made to a representative from the Department for Education who has worked with the school since it opened.
- Inspectors analysed 55 responses to the online parent questionnaire, Parent View, and met with a group of parents. Inspectors analysed the responses to 22 staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

Sarah Hubbard, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

John McAteer

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Sir Thomas Fremantle is a free school, established in 2013. The school is registered to provide education for students aged 11 to 18, but only has students in Years 7, 8 and 9 currently on roll. A sizeable proportion of students in Year 9 joined the school after the start of Year 7.
- The school shares its site with Buckinghamshire Adult Education Services. There is a new site planned for the school, scheduled to open in 2016.
- Just over one in 10 students is eligible for additional government funding allocated to support disadvantaged students. This is well below average.
- The proportion of students who have a statement of special educational needs or receive the highest level of additional support from the academy is slightly above average.
- The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups, or who speak English as an additional language is well below average.
- The last lesson of each school day is dedicated to compulsory enrichment activities. The school provides each student with a tablet computer.
- The school is an active member of the Denbigh Teaching Alliance.
- The school uses no alternative provision.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so it is typically outstanding by:
 - ensuring most-able students are better stretched by the tasks teachers set, and have the opportunity to evaluate complex ideas and concepts
 - making sure that all students are given the opportunity to respond to teachers' marking by making the improvements that teachers recommend.
- Further develop subject leaders' contribution to improving teaching and students' achievement by:
 - making sure they track and analyse the achievement of different groups of students in order to identify promptly where further improvements in teaching need to be made
 - providing them with more opportunities to observe lessons and use their observations to support and challenge the teachers they manage.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have established a culture that encourages academic ambition, nurtures students' individual talents, and celebrates diversity. As a result, students achieve well and have very positive attitudes to learning. Students actively strive to be successful in all that they do.
- Leaders and governors have a sharp and accurate view of what they need to improve in order for their high expectations to be met. Leaders are quick to make changes, and regularly check their modifications have the impact they anticipate.
- Senior leaders set no limits on what students can achieve. They successfully use their tracking of students' progress to identify students who need extra support. As a result, students make good progress in English and science and very good progress in mathematics, history and languages.
- Senior leaders and subject leaders have ensured additional funding supports disadvantaged students effectively. The vast majority attain as well as other students of the same ability. However, subject leaders are not yet tracking the progress that disadvantaged students make on an individual basis.
- Senior leaders check the quality of teaching, including the quality of teachers' marking, regularly and thoroughly. Where teaching needs to be even stronger, senior leaders provide teachers with well-focused training and support that lead to rapid improvement.
- Subject leaders model highly effective teaching approaches and lead by example. However, they do not make a big enough contribution to monitoring and improving the teaching of the staff they manage.
- The curriculum effectively focuses on preparing students to achieve GCSE success in English Baccalaureate (Ebacc) subjects (English, mathematics, science, modern foreign languages, and humanities). A particular strength is the range of modern foreign languages studied from Year 8 onwards, including Italian. Professional practitioners, working alongside teachers, provide additional expertise to ensure students succeed in design and technology.
- Students develop sporting, leadership and performance skills to a high standard in enhancement lessons at the end of each school day, many of which are delivered by professional coaches. These lessons effectively promote students' social and cultural education.
- The school works well with parents. They are highly involved in the life of the school and the majority of the governing body are parents. Parents are very satisfied with the school overall. Parents highly praised students' behaviour when they spoke to inspectors.
- The school is an active member of the Denbigh Teaching Alliance, and its leaders are involved in successfully delivering support to trainee teachers in the alliance. The school has worked with other local schools, including those in the alliance, to gauge whether its teachers assess students' work accurately.
- Staff have successfully ensured this is a fully inclusive school, where all students enjoy learning in an environment which is free from discrimination and actively promotes equality of opportunity. A sizeable proportion of students who join after the start of Year 7 are disabled or have special educational needs. Leaders ensure they settle in very quickly, and most make good progress because their needs are met fully.
- Leaders promote fundamental British values very well through whole-school assemblies, and provide students with the chance to support a wide range of local and national charities. In well-planned ethics lessons, students discuss what is right and wrong and find out more about the ideas that have shaped British values.
- Leaders have established a very strong ethos of positivity, pride and respect. Staff demonstrate these values in the way they interact with students, parents and the wider community. Students do not consider poor behaviour as an option.
- In order to limit the risk of a shared site, leaders carefully monitor the robust safeguarding procedures they have implemented for all site users. They minimise the risk of providing every student with a tablet computer by rigorously monitoring students' internet usage. The school meets statutory safeguarding requirements very well.
- Leaders ensure effective guidance supports students in deciding their next steps, through combining targeted independent careers advice, links with Buckingham University and regular visits from the armed forces. They relentlessly focus on ensuring students have the qualifications, confidence and skills to realise their ambitions. The vast majority of more-able students spoken to by inspectors said that they had ambitions to attend top universities.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors insist leaders make the school as good as it possibly can be. For example, they have challenged leaders to provide a wider range of GCSE subjects for students. Governors carefully analyse

students' end-of-year progress and robustly challenge the school to make improvements. Governors know the school well because they make regular visits to see students working in lessons. Consequently, governors have a detailed understanding of where the strengths and weaknesses in teaching lie. They use this knowledge effectively to ensure teachers' pay is linked to their performance and have granted rewards accordingly. Governors have started to analyse the progress students make during the school year, so they can challenge leaders to make improvements more promptly. However, this approach is still in its infancy so its impact is yet limited. Following recent training, governors now focus on checking that additional pupil premium funding is having a positive impact on students' achievement. Governors have worked tirelessly to ensure other users of the school site adhere to the school's safeguarding procedures. They monitor this rigorously.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Parents, staff and students all acknowledge that standards of behaviour are very high in lessons and around school.
- Disruption of any kind in lessons is extremely rare. Students take pride in their work, and try hard. They display highly positive attitudes to learning. For example, in every class, subject ambassadors support their peers who are stuck or confused.
- Students actively support their school and work to make it as good as it can be. They contribute to the positive environment by ensuring that there is no litter around the site, wearing their uniforms with pride and speaking courteously to each other and their teachers.
- Incidents of bullying are very unusual; but, on the very few occasions they occur, leaders deal with them robustly.
- Attendance is similar to national average. It has recently dipped to slightly below average because some students have serious medical conditions. The school supports these students effectively by working in close partnership with their parents so they can continue with their studies whilst recuperating.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding.
- Leaders and governors have worked tenaciously to ensure that other site users comply with the school's safeguarding policies and monitor their compliance rigorously.
- Leaders successfully ensure students remain safe when using the tablet computers provided. They have placed the highest security settings on the school's internet and ceaselessly monitor students' usage. Leaders take swift and robust action on the very few occasions when students access blocked sites, including social networking sites.
- Leaders have provided students with effective training about the risks of being groomed online. On the rare occasions that students have put themselves at risk of this, leaders have worked very productively with police and parents to ensure students rapidly adopt safer practices when online.
- Leaders closely monitor how effectively the local authority supports the very small number of students they refer to its child protection services, and where necessary challenge the authority to act more swiftly. Leaders have produced very detailed case studies that evaluate the impact of the support provided by both external agencies and the school on students' achievement and sense of well-being.
- Robust and detailed plans are in place to ensure students are safe on trips abroad. Staff make reconnaissance visits to proposed destinations to check any potential risks.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is typically good, and some is outstanding. In the vast majority of lessons, teachers insist that students work hard and that no time is wasted. As a result, most students make good progress and some make very good progress.
- In English, teachers expertly pose questions to students in order to illustrate key concepts. For instance, in several classes, teachers skilfully challenged students to explain their interpretation of a text to their peers. Teachers expertly used the differing responses students gave to exemplify that any image or piece of writing can be interpreted in different ways. Students listened carefully to their peers' views and built on them in their written answers. As a result, many students developed the skills required to do well in GCSE English.
- Teaching in history, mathematics, and languages is particularly strong. Teachers plan tasks that arouse

students' interest and intellectual curiosity. For example, in a mathematics lesson, students made rapid progress because they had to apply their learning about ratios to working out real-life distances from ordnance survey maps.

- Teachers of modern foreign languages use highly effective approaches to ensure students who study four languages remember the different vocabulary and grammatical structures belonging to each language. Consequently, students make very good progress in modern foreign languages.
- In many lessons, teachers use well thought-out resources that help less-able students and those with special educational needs make very good progress. In a history lesson, less-able students were provided with sources on the Dunkirk evacuation that were more simply written than those used by others. This meant they could both understand and interpret the sources well enough to gain high-level skills along with in-depth historical knowledge.
- Teachers effectively question students throughout the lesson to check their understanding and ensure they are keeping up with the brisk pace. Where this indicates that students are confused or mistaken, teachers help students to rectify and learn from their mistakes through further, more probing questioning.
- Teachers' comments on marked work are detailed and effectively diagnose what students need to do in order to improve. In some subjects, teachers give students the opportunity to respond to these comments and complete the additional tasks they set. This practice is not common across all subjects.
- In a minority of lessons, some most-able students are not stretched enough. They complete tasks teachers set too quickly and sometimes extension tasks offer more of the same, rather than greater intellectual challenge. Occasionally, these students suggest alternative ways of solving problems and completing tasks. Some teachers do not respond to their suggestions positively enough.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Students join the school in Year 7 with starting points broadly in line with national averages and make good progress in English and very good progress in mathematics. Consequently, most students are on track to make good progress and meet their targets.
- Some students who join the school after Year 7 are not always set targets that are challenging enough to ensure they make the very rapid progress needed to catch up with their peers. Students in the current Year 9, who joined the school after Year 7, make better progress in mathematics than they do in English because they have weak levels of literacy. Although the school's leaders have helped this group improve through additional literacy classes, some have not yet caught up with their peers who started the school at the beginning of Year 7.
- In mathematics, teachers develop students' mathematical reasoning skills effectively and ensure that the work set closely matches the abilities of students who have special educational needs. This ensures the vast majority of students make very good progress.
- More-able students generally achieve well in the school across most subjects. However, some of the most-able students are not being stretched enough and their targets are not challenging enough. As a result, they do not make as much progress as they could.
- In science, some more-able students are not always given enough opportunity to explore connections between different scientific theories, despite indicating that they have the capacity to do so. More-able students make better progress in mathematics because they are given opportunities to participate in national competitions and class challenges that require them to solve difficult mathematical problems.
- By providing effective support, leaders have ensured disadvantaged students achieve in line with their peers in English, mathematics and science in most year groups. However, less-able disadvantaged Year 7 students are not achieving as well as other students of a similar ability in mathematics. The gap between their achievement and that of others of a similar ability is wider than in English, but is closing.
- In history and modern foreign languages, students achieve highly and make good progress. Students make very good use of their tablet computers to research additional facts in history and extra vocabulary in language lessons. The work in students' books indicates that students rapidly acquire the skills they need to achieve very well in these subjects.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs make progress in line with their peers. Some make very good progress, especially in lessons where teachers provide bespoke resources that help them to access the work effectively.
- Students' spoken communication is very strong. Teachers challenge them to explain their ideas clearly, and from Year 7 insist that students use correct technical terms in their verbal responses to questions. This helps most students to complete the longer writing tasks they are set in the many subjects to at least a good standard.

- Students achieve well in technology because external experts teach alongside the school's teachers to ensure students gain high-level skills. For example, all students in Years 8 and 9 have completed a module in an accredited vocational qualification in three-dimensional design and manufacture.
- Students achieve well in sport. A high proportion of students represent their school in competitive sports fixtures and the table tennis team represents the county.

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	139663
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	450030

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Free school
Age range of pupils	11-18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	203
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Glenn Smith
Headteacher	Mr Darren Lyon
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01296 711970
Email address	headmaster@sirthomasfremantle.org

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