

Joyce Frankland Academy, Newport

Bury Water Lane, Newport, Saffron Walden CB11 3TR

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| Inspection dates | 11–12 May 2016 |
| Overall effectiveness | Good |
| Effectiveness of leadership and management | Good |
| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment | Good |
| Personal development, behaviour and welfare | Good |
| Outcomes for pupils | Good |
| 16 to 19 study programmes | Good |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Requires improvement |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- School leaders, including governors, are providing strong leadership and a clear direction for the school. As a result, the school continues to improve.
- The progress of pupils currently in the school has improved since the last inspection. They are making good progress across a range of subjects.
- The management of teacher performance is rigorous. It focuses on learning and pupil outcomes. It has had a significant impact on improving the quality of teaching within the school.
- The sixth form is good. Learners are well taught and make good progress. Sixth form learners act as good role models for younger pupils.
- Pupils have positive attitudes toward their learning. They arrive punctually to lessons with the right equipment and ready to learn.
- Pupils feel safe and secure in school.
- The school provides exceptional support for pupils of families in the armed services. As a result these pupils are thriving.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is nurtured as they have access to a wide range of activities.
- Governors know the school well. They provide a good level of challenge to senior leaders. They make an effective contribution to the work of the school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- As a result of inconsistent teaching in the past some pupils have gaps in their mathematics skills and knowledge. Therefore progress in mathematics is not as rapid as it is in English.
- The proportion of most-able pupils achieving A* and A grades is too low because teachers do not challenge them sufficiently.
- Subject leaders do not monitor the quality of assessment feedback sufficiently to ensure that it is precise enough to have an impact on pupils' learning.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of pupils who leave at the end of key stage 4 with the highest GCSE grades.
- Continue to improve the quality of teaching and outcomes for pupils in mathematics by:
 - ensuring teachers use assessment information to deliver lessons that provide opportunities for pupils to catch up and close the gaps in their skills and knowledge
 - sharing the existing good teaching practice within the department.
- Further develop assessment by ensuring that subject leaders monitor the consistency of feedback within their subject to ensure it is of a quality that helps pupils to make good progress.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The principal provides strong and decisive leadership. He has high expectations and a clear sense of direction for the school. An overwhelming majority of staff working at the school during the last inspection agree that it has improved since then.
- Pupils are generally positive about the school and many of those spoken to by inspectors said that behaviour and teaching have improved in the last two years. Pupils are aware of the problems the school faced in recruiting teachers, especially in mathematics, but say teaching in this subject is getting better. One group summed up the situation by saying 'The principal has worked out which areas need improvement and is working at the improvements.'
- The principal is supported by a strong senior leadership team whose work is having a positive impact on improving outcomes for pupils. All leaders have a clear awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are open and honest about where improvements are needed and plan strategically so that resources are directed where there will be maximum impact.
- The leadership of the quality of teaching and learning is very well structured. Leaders have put into place careful, precise and thorough plans for evaluating that quality and taking action if teaching is not at least good. Teacher underperformance has been addressed. Thus, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment has continued to improve since the last inspection.
- Performance management systems are rigorous and teachers are set targets linked to pupil progress. Teachers are supported in improving their performance through a programme of support and training. Only those teachers who meet their targets receive pay awards.
- The progress of pupils is tracked rigorously throughout the year. Senior and subject leaders identify pupils who are falling behind. Swift steps are taken to provide the appropriate support for these pupils so that they quickly catch up in most subjects. Inspectors observed a handwriting session designed to improve the speed and quality of writing in a small group of pupils. Progress information indicates that almost all pupils who take part in this programme improve their writing.
- The pupil premium funding is used well to support disadvantaged pupils. School leaders have identified the main challenges that affect the progress of this group of pupils. Staff have received additional training on supporting disadvantaged pupils within the classroom. Pupils' work and school data indicates increased progress for disadvantaged pupils in a range of subjects in both key stage 3 and 4.
- Year 7 pupils who join the school with below-average attainment in mathematics and English receive good support through targeted small-group sessions. Inspectors listened to a small group of pupils read and noted they were confident readers, who enjoyed reading and talked enthusiastically about their reading.
- The school offers a broad and balanced curriculum providing opportunities to study creative, technical, sporting and academic subjects. In key stage 4 pupils are encouraged to take a balanced range of subjects so the proportion of pupils achieving the English Baccalaureate is above average.
- The curriculum is supported by trips, visits and visiting speakers. The school offers a varied programme of clubs and activities that cover music, sport, reading, art and the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme. Clubs are well attended and valued by the pupils. These all make a strong contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils.
- The school has welcomed the support of the local authority, who have worked with them to improve teaching and in validating their judgements about the quality and impact of leaders' work. Local schools have worked alongside the school, supporting them with teaching and assessment.
- The overwhelming majority of parents and staff have confidence in the leadership of the school. A typical comment from parents is: 'The many changes to the academy have had a hugely positive impact on the teaching and learning in this academy.'
- The effectiveness of subject leaders has improved since the last inspection and is having more of an impact on raising standards. They now monitor the quality of teaching within their subject, support staff to improve their teaching and track pupil progress. They know the strengths and areas for improvement within their subject. However, they are not all consistent in ensuring that the quality of feedback given to pupils is having sufficient impact on improving pupils' progress.

■ The governance of the school

- The governing body is well organised and between them governors bring a range of appropriate skills to their role.
- Governors know the school well and understand its strengths and weaknesses. They have a clear sense of direction for the school and work alongside senior leaders writing the school improvement and development plan.
- Governors understand what the data tells them about the outcomes for different groups of pupils. They understand how the school's performance compares to all schools nationally.
- Governors hold senior leaders firmly to account and pose challenging questions through meetings and visits to the school. Governors link to subjects or with senior leaders and through meetings they are able to look at the effectiveness of the leaders' actions. Governors also provide support for leaders.
- The governing body ensures that the school meets the statutory safeguarding requirements.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- School leaders ensure that all staff and volunteers who work with pupils have checks that meet the current legislation regarding working with children. The identity of all visitors is carefully checked.
- Staff and governors are trained according to the latest guidelines.
- Good systems are in place for recording any concerns staff may have and all staff are aware of the process. The school works well with the appropriate agencies to ensure pupils are kept safe.
- The school is on a split site and pupils have to cross the road during the day. The crossing is always supervised to ensure pupil safety.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Teaching has improved since the last inspection and is now typically good across the school.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge. In a range of subjects this is used to plan and deliver well-thought-out lessons that build on pupils' previous learning. Evidence of strong planning which allowed pupils to progress quickly was seen in English, history, languages and science.
- Pupils have positive attitudes towards their learning and they are keen to do well. They are developing into resilient learners and inspectors saw many examples of pupils who were determined to finish an activity without 'giving up' and asking for help. Pupils understand and follow the well-established classroom expectations and respond well to teachers should they 'wander' off task. Almost all pupils take pride in their work.
- Learning support assistants work alongside teachers well. They provide good-quality support because they know the needs of the pupils exceptionally well. They question pupils skilfully to check their understanding or to further deepen their learning.
- Most teachers use questioning to consolidate and deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding. Inspectors saw many examples of this in both key stages. For example, in an English lesson where pupils were discussing a scene in a Shakespearian play, the teacher challenged the pupils and deepened their understanding because they listened carefully to pupils' discussions, quickly picking up misconceptions. Skilful questioning enabled the pupils to consolidate the meaning of the quotations and secure their understanding of the text.
- Pupils have the opportunity to read and write in a wide range of subjects and, where appropriate, use their mathematical skills. Inspectors saw evidence of pupils' writing for a range of purposes in a variety of subjects. They noted how the quality of writing had improved for most pupils during the year.
- Homework is set using an online programme. Pupils are very complimentary about this as they understand the purpose of the activities and say they are appropriate to their learning.
- A very large majority of parents feel that teaching is good and that the school sets appropriate homework.
- Inspectors saw some good examples of teachers setting challenging activities both in the classroom and in pupils' exercise books. When challenged, pupils responded well; they really enjoyed their learning and made good progress. However, in some lessons the challenge was not sufficient to deepen the knowledge of some pupils, especially the most able.

- Although teachers deliver lessons in most subjects that enable pupils to make good progress, it is less strong in mathematics. The disruption to pupils' learning prior to this year has resulted in gaps in pupils' mathematical knowledge and skills. Inspectors saw some examples of very strong planning and lesson delivery that addressed these gaps, and pupils were making accelerated progress as a result. However, not all teachers' planning and delivery is of this quality.
- Since the last inspection the school has introduced 'challenge checkpoints' to assess pupils' progress and attainment in lessons. 'Challenge checkpoint' is applied consistently across a wide range of subjects and inspectors saw examples where it has had a marked impact on improving pupil progress. However, not all teachers are providing pupils with assessment feedback that is precise enough to have a positive impact on their learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils feel safe in the school and say there is someone to talk to should problems arise. Pupils who arrive midway through the year told inspectors they had been welcomed into the school by staff and pupils so they soon settled into school life. An overwhelming majority of parents feel their child is safe in the school.
- Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations and understand the dangers associated with using technology. Through visiting speakers, and through personal, social and health education lessons and assemblies they receive advice on safety and lifestyle choices that could affect their health; for example drug and alcohol misuse.
- Pupils from service families are provided with the specialist support they need in order to help them overcome the difficulties many experience which have an impact on their learning. A dedicated member of staff works with the children and their families to ensure they have access to all aspects of school life and make good progress. The quality of this work has been recognised by the Ministry of Defence as an example of exceptional practice.
- Bullying is rare and pupils say that if it should happen they have confidence in staff to deal with it. Most parents and staff agree that any bullying is dealt with quickly and effectively. Older pupils told inspectors the school was a 'close knit community with little bullying because we respect one another and our differences'.
- Historically the proportion of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs or disability who are persistently absent from school has been above average. The school has very recently employed a pastoral support officer to support these children and their families. This is leading to a reduction in persistent absences.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are polite and confident. They take pride in their school and their work. The environment is free from litter because pupils take responsibility well and put their rubbish in the bin.
- The vast majority of pupils have good attitudes towards their learning. They understand the school's discipline system and say that most teachers apply it consistently. When it is not applied consistently pupils say there can be some off-task behaviour. Almost all pupils who responded to the online questionnaire said they thought behaviour around the school and in lessons was good. Most parents agree that behaviour is good.
- Pupils are rarely late and attendance is in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent from school is now below average.

Outcomes for pupils are good

- In 2015 the proportion of pupils attaining five good grades in GCSE including English and mathematics was above average. Progress in English was stronger than in mathematics.
- The school's tracking data suggests that the current key stage 4 pupils are typically making good progress in a range of subjects. This suggests that progress and attainment will continue to improve and

remain above average. Inspectors confirmed this by looking at the work of pupils in Years 10 and 11.

- Pupils in key stage 3 are making good progress in a wide range of subjects, including science, mathematics and humanities, where historically progress has not been as rapid as in other subjects.
- In 2015 the progress of disadvantaged pupils was below that of other pupils nationally and in the school. As a result of the measures put in place to support these pupils to catch up with their learning they are now making progress in line with other pupils in the school. School tracking information indicates that the gap in attainment of disadvantaged pupils compared to the attainment of others in the school is rapidly narrowing. Pupils' work confirms good progress and attainment.
- The small number of pupils who attend the alternative education placement at the farm based at Saffron Walden High School are making good progress. They are all on track to gain their agricultural qualification as well as the academic subjects studied in the school.
- Historically the progress of pupils who have special educational needs or disability has been below average. As a result of the prompt implementation of support and regular and systematic assessment the changing needs of the pupils are met, leading to good progress from their starting points.
- Pupils work hard and are keen to do well in all their subjects. However, historically the proportion of pupils who achieve above expected progress has varied and often been below average. Leaders have recognised that the progress of the most-able pupils, middle-ability pupils and boys could be further improved. Inspectors saw evidence of improving progress for all these groups of pupils leading to better outcomes but it is not yet consistent.
- The school provides good advice to pupils who are choosing their examination courses and impartial careers advice during key stage 4. As a result the proportion of pupils going on to and remaining in further education, training or employment is above average.

16 to 19 study programmes

are good

- The leadership of the sixth form is good. Leaders have high expectations of learners and set high attainment targets. Leaders know the strengths and weaknesses of both staff and learners and accurately judge the quality of teaching and learning in sixth form lessons.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the sixth form is good across the range of subjects and is sometimes inspirational. Teachers have strong subject knowledge, have high expectations of learners and most set work that challenges them. Teachers' accurate knowledge of the examination requirements ensures learners are well prepared for external examinations.
- Good provision is made for the personal development, behaviour and welfare of learners. They have access to a wide range of extra-curricular activities and take on a number of roles within the school; many that support younger pupils. For example, a group of sixth form learners support younger pupils with their reading. The learners work with the learning support assistant to make resources and deliver the programme.
- The learners report that pastoral care is a 'great strength of the sixth form', saying 'they are like family, they always have time for you'. The learners also feel that the friendliness between them and between learners and staff is one of the best things about the school. Parents agree and typically describe it as 'outstanding'.
- The school offers a range of academic subjects at level A level. Learners make good progress on these courses and the number of them who leave having achieved top A level grades is improving. Work seen by inspectors confirms that learners make good progress in most subjects. There are a few subjects where progress is less rapid as teachers are not challenging learners sufficiently.
- Learners who enter the sixth form without a grade C or above in GCSE English or mathematics are provided with the opportunity to study and resit the examinations. Almost all learners achieve the required grade.
- Learners have access to work experience which covers a wide range of opportunities. This enables them to gain the wider skills required when working and for some helps them make a career decision.
- The proportion of learners progressing from Year 12 to Year 13 is high and increasing. They receive good-quality, impartial careers advice alongside advice and support from staff members within the school. The proportion of learners who progress to training and employment programmes and university is above average.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 138734 |
| Local authority | Essex |
| Inspection number | 10011869 |

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

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| Type of school | Secondary |
| School category | Academy converter Academy free school/Academy special converter |
| Age range of pupils | 11–18 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 844 |
| Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes | 123 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Paul Gray |
| Principal | Gordon Farquhar |
| Telephone number | 01799 540 237 |
| Website | www.jfan.org.uk |
| Email address | admin@jfan.org.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 3–4 June 2014 |

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- Most pupils are from a White British background and very few speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is below average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for attainment and progress by the end of Year 11.
- The proportion of pupils who enter or leave the school other than at the normal times is above average.
- Currently 10 pupils from Years 10 and 11 attend the farm at Saffron Walden County High School for one day a week. They study a course in animal care.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed learning in 33 lessons across a range of subjects. Senior leaders accompanied them for 11 of these observations. The inspectors also looked at the work in pupils' books in lessons. Inspectors visited seven lessons to look at learning across a range of subjects.
- Inspectors listened to a small group of Year 7 pupils read and talked to them about their reading.
- Inspectors visited an assembly.
- Inspectors held formal discussions with four groups of pupils, along with informal conversations with others at break and lunchtime. They took into account the 116 responses to the pupil questionnaire.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents, including the school's analysis of its own work and its improvement plan, information on pupils' academic progress, and documents relating to the quality of teaching, staff training, behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- Discussions were held with the principal, senior leaders, subject leaders, head of sixth form, five members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspection team took account of the 162 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View.
- The inspection team received and considered the views of the 64 staff who also completed staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

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| Caroline Pardy, lead inspector | Ofsted Inspector |
| Martin Brown | Ofsted Inspector |
| Susan Cox | Ofsted Inspector |
| Jane Crow | Ofsted Inspector |

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