

# Frewen College

Brickwall, Northiam, Rye, East Sussex TN31 6NL

## Inspection dates

14–16 June 2016

## Overall effectiveness

**Good**

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Sixth form provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The new principal has a clear vision to improve academic outcomes for pupils. He, ably supported by other leaders, has brought purpose and rigour to the work of the school. As a result, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is improving and pupils' rates of progress are accelerating.
- Leaders' evaluations of their own effectiveness are accurate. Consequently, precisely focused plans for improvement guide leaders' work effectively.
- Governors play a crucial part in driving improvement at Frewen College. They have made useful decisions to ensure the college functions efficiently. Governors hold leaders rigorously to account for improving the college.
- Wider opportunities on offer as part of the curriculum, as well as those outside of the main curriculum, help develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development particularly well.
- Pupils benefit from a range of therapies that are used extremely well to supplement the curriculum and help ensure pupils' outcomes are good.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good, and sometimes better. Some departments are particularly effective, such as art, the humanities and English.
- 16 to 19 study programmes on offer in the newly formed sixth form are good and improving. There are strong links with Bexhill and Plumpton colleges, where students have access to courses that are appropriate for their interests and abilities.
- British values are at the heart of policy and practice. Equality of opportunity and the value of diversity are central to leaders' vision for education. Consequently, pupils describe feeling valued at Frewen for who they are. They make rapid gains in their self-confidence, self-awareness and self-esteem.
- Pupils achieve good outcomes. They make strong progress from their starting points academically, socially and emotionally. They are very well prepared for the next stage of education, employment or training.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Several areas of work are very new, including the sixth form and the changes that are currently being made to leadership and management. They are not yet established and need more time to embed.
- Some teaching is not as imaginative and creative as that of the best. Where this is the case, pupils do not make rapid and sustained progress. The most able pupils do not achieve as well as they could.
- Leaders do not consistently make the best use of resources available to them.
- The experiences of pupils throughout the curriculum do not promote their language development as well as they could.
- Parents are not well enough informed about the improvements that are being made to provision. This means some are not clear why actions have been taken and the difference the changes are making to pupils' outcomes.

### Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

## Full report

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

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that it is consistently as strong as the best.
- Improve pupils' outcomes by ensuring:
  - pupils make rapid and sustained progress across all key stages and departments
  - the most able achieve results that reflect their full potential.
- Continue to improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
  - further enriching the curriculum so that opportunities for promoting language are consistently utilised
  - embedding the changes to leadership and management to ensure that stakeholders pull together under the same vision for improvement
  - making better use of the best practice in the school to improve provision overall.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- Under the stewardship of the focused and strategic principal, leadership is effective and provision is improving. He is building a leadership team around him, through a staffing restructure, that is precisely focused on what is needed to ensure that pupils receive the education and support they need. Some senior leaders, such as the head of prep and the head of the sixth form, are very effective and already supporting the changes the principal is leading well.
- The principal, ably supported by other senior leaders, governors and subject leaders, has successfully and rightly instilled an unwavering focus on improving pupils' achievement through the quality of teaching. The school is very well placed to improve further.
- Leaders' monitoring of the school is rigorous and effective. Leaders at all levels carefully check the quality of provision in their areas of responsibility. New systems to track the progress pupils make are being used to fully understand what is going well and where extra focus is needed. This helps ensure that leaders' evaluations of the effectiveness of the school are accurate and useful to plan further improvements.
- The performance management of teachers is now robust and has helped bring about improvements in the quality of teaching. Teachers benefit from clear and challenging targets that relate to pupils' achievement and help them to focus on what they need to do better in their practice. There is an appropriate link between the performance of staff and their pay. Through his role in the wider monitoring of the school, the principal ensures that teachers are held to account robustly in their work towards meeting their targets.
- Subject leaders demonstrate the skills needed to lead improvements in their areas of responsibility. They contribute to the monitoring of the school and work well together as a team to learn from each other.
- The marking and feedback policy that has been introduced by leaders is being consistently applied. Teachers accurately identify what pupils have done well and where they have misconceptions or need to do extra work.
- The curriculum at the school is well focused on the needs of pupils. Opportunities to develop pupils' self-awareness and self-esteem are very well developed. For example, pupils report very positively about the opportunities for outdoor learning, where they develop skills of resilience and collaboration. Pupils also benefit from bespoke access to therapists as part of the curriculum and this is also very effective.
- Learning in some curriculum areas is particularly strong, for example in art, the humanities and English. Although the curriculum is well designed to provide for pupils' language development, there is still some work to be done to ensure that opportunities are consistently seized across the school. At times, the activities are focused too much on one area of learning. This means pupils do not always benefit from the promotion of language through their play, or in subjects other than English, as well as they could.
- There is a very strong sense of community at the school, which pupils report very positively about. Their spiritual, cultural, social and moral development is catered for particularly well. They understand and learn to value other faiths and beliefs by learning about them across a range of subjects. Learning opportunities, teaching programmes and the systems established in school to ensure that everyone is included and valued mean discrimination of any kind is not tolerated and that there is equality in opportunity for all. This also ensures that fundamental British values are promoted very well.
- Some members of the school community remain unclear why leadership and management changes were needed. Although there have been significant improvements in teaching and learning, some staff and parents are not convinced that the changes being made are for the better, saying that the benefits have not been communicated clearly enough. This indicates that there is still some resistance to change, which means the school is not improving as quickly as it could.
- Leaders do not always make the best use of the resources they have available. For example, the strength of teaching and learning in art seen in key stages 3 and 4 could and should have an impact on art in the prep school. Equally, the good quality of science teaching in the prep school does not influence that seen in key stage 4 as much as it should.
- **The governance of the school**
  - The governing body is a key component in Frewen College's improvement journey. It ensures that changes to leadership are focused on improving effectiveness, particularly in how well pupils do at the school. For example, the appointment of the principal has led to a much-needed change in focus to

accelerating pupils' progress. Governors' effectiveness in holding leaders to account ensures the school is very well placed to improve in the future.

- Governors receive useful information from school leaders on how well teaching supports learning. They follow this up effectively by regularly visiting the school. The sharing of responsibilities among governors has ensured that all aspects of the school are carefully reviewed. Where weaknesses appear, governors ask astute and challenging questions of leaders, which leads to useful further action when necessary.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Safeguarding policies and procedures are robust. For example, the implementation of child protection processes has been very well led and is extremely effective. Staff receive appropriate training, including that completed by the designated safeguarding lead. Effective in-house training ensures that staff know exactly what to do if they have a concern about a child or if a child should disclose any information of a worrying nature.
- The school works very effectively with other agencies to protect children. Leaders are tenacious in following up concerns when necessary. Records are kept diligently. Safer recruitment is taken very seriously and all checks are completed in a timely and appropriate manner. The single central record is carefully maintained. It is monitored well by the school business manager and principal, and verified by governors.
- The strong community at the school also ensures that there is an open and caring culture. Pupils report they know who to go to if they are concerned about anything and that they would be taken seriously. They also believe that school staff would take effective action to support them, should the need arise. Site security is generally appropriate, although the site is very open, which means the levels of supervision at breaktimes are, rightly, carefully planned and robust.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment** is good

- The quality of teaching at the school is good and sometimes better. Pupils benefit from lessons that are strongly focused on their academic and social needs. The environment for learning is calm, safe and purposeful. As a result, pupils feel able to take risks because they are supported to do so by their teachers and peers. Staff are well qualified and have specific expertise in dyslexia and other conditions that they provide for in their lessons. This means that lessons are structured in a way to ensure that pupils can make the best use of time to make progress.
- The use of assessment has been a key area of focus at the school since the arrival of the principal. Consequently, assessment is used well to ensure that lessons build on what pupils already know and can do. Therapists make a strong contribution to the assessments that take place for pupils. They regularly provide assessment information for teachers to ensure pupils can make progress in all areas.
- Pupils often arrive at the school having developed very negative views of education and of themselves. Staff, sensibly, ensure that pupils' self-esteem is also carefully assessed so that programmes of study can be put in place that meet pupils' holistic needs. As a result, teachers plan lessons that carefully target work at the individual level of each pupil.
- Teachers make good use of other adults. Teaching assistants are skilled and support learning in lessons well. Therapists are often present in lessons and usefully focus on individuals' needs to help them to make progress. Working relationships between staff members are very strong. This translates well to the strong relationships they also have with pupils.
- The teaching of basic English skills is very effective, particularly in reading. The teaching of phonics is particularly strong. Pupils rapidly develop stronger attitudes to reading, as a result. They have been helped to develop their skills through the carefully targeted support they are given.
- Teaching in the prep school is very well developed. Staff make good use of outdoor learning opportunities to complement what pupils learn in class. As in other parts of the school, relationships are very strong and teachers know their pupils exceptionally well. The effective partnerships with therapists ensure that learning is fun, engaging and meets pupils' needs very well. Consequently, pupils make strong progress in their time in the prep school, particularly in reading, mathematics and science.
- The teaching of art, the humanities and English in the secondary school is excellent.
- The teaching of mathematics has only recently improved and is not as strong as in other subjects. Leaders have taken effective action, having identified that pupils did not make as much progress in mathematics as they did in other subjects. Leaders have rightly identified there is more to do in this area. For example, pupils do not get enough opportunities to use their reasoning skills or to truly master new concepts that they are taught.

- Teaching is sometimes exceptionally strong, such as in art, history, geography, religious education and English, where teachers ensure pupils benefit from highly engaging and purposeful learning. Where this is the case, pupils make outstanding progress and achieve outstanding outcomes. However, this excellent practice is not yet consistent. In some departments, where teaching is not as strong, pupils still make good progress, but it is not yet rapid and sustained. This is why the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not outstanding.

## **Personal development, behaviour and welfare are outstanding**

### **Personal development and welfare**

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Pupils unanimously describe the difference coming to Frewen has on their self-esteem. Staff treat pupils as individuals and there are frequent opportunities for pupils to explore their own aspirations and how to achieve these.
- Careers advice is delivered from Year 9 and includes usefully linked work experience. Leaders have a secure plan for how careers advice will be developed further, since the opening of the sixth form. Consequently, pupils' self-awareness is exceptionally well developed and so they make sound course and career choices.
- Pupils are keen to do well and want to make a contribution to the school, to the local community and as global citizens whenever the opportunity arises. Consequently, they feel they are valued members of their community and that they have the potential to make a difference.
- The promotion of healthy lifestyles is very strong. The school benefits from a stimulating and varied outdoor environment where pupils play and learn happily and well together. Leaders ensure that pupils are given extra opportunities to develop socially, as well as academically. They benefit from the exciting range of curricular and extra-curricular opportunities there are on offer, such as the regular camping opportunities, residential visits to the south of France and trips to the theatre in London.
- Pupils' attendance is exceptionally high. All groups of pupils attend equally as well as each other.
- Pupils speak very positively about the school. They believe it is a place where the teachers really care about them. They rightly believe they are kept safe. This view is also shared by their parents.
- Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe, including when using the internet. Leaders have established an open culture where people feel easily able to share concerns if they have them. This helps to ensure that everyone looks out for and after each other.

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils consistently demonstrate exceptionally positive attitudes to their learning.
- Pupils and students have shown consistently strong attitudes in lessons and to their work. There is a strong sense of community among those who attend the school.
- Relationships are at the core of the school community. There are very strong working relationships between staff, between pupils and staff and, consequently, between the pupils themselves. Pupils rightly report that the teachers really help them with their learning and ensure that, on the rare occasions when pupils fall out, they are helped to sort things out effectively.
- Pupils make an exceptional contribution to the school. They are delightful. They behave impeccably in and around the school, including when moving from one activity to the next, and during playtimes and lunchtimes.
- Pupils spoken to all shared experiences of bullying they had had in their previous schools. However, they reported unreservedly that bullying was not an issue at the school and that they were confident it would be dealt with effectively if it was.
- Leaders' records of serious incidents demonstrate that these are very rare. Exclusions are therefore exceptionally infrequent.

## **Outcomes for pupils are good**

- Pupils start at the school at different stages and with different levels of attainment. Strong systems of assessment, which include input from therapists, as well as teachers, ensure that pupils benefit from

bespoke programmes of study for their specific needs. Consequently, pupils' rates of personal, social and academic progress are strong and, at times, exceptional. Since the arrival of the new principal, rates of progress are accelerating, particularly in the prep school and in some departments, including art.

- Pupils' outcomes in English are very strong, particularly in reading. This is because of the strong teaching in this area. Pupils make exceptional progress in their speaking and listening skills and this helps with their self-esteem. Progress in writing is slower. However, given the pupils' starting points, this is to be expected. Work in pupils' books shows that they are expected to write at length in subjects across the curriculum. Expectations are high and so pupils make strong progress over time.
- Pupils make very strong progress in the prep school in all areas of the curriculum, although they make similarly slower progress to their older peers in writing. By the time they reach the end of Year 6, they are very well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics and science is solid, but not as consistently strong as in English.
- Pupils show pride in their work and make significant gains in their writing. Teachers help pupils to identify where they have done particularly well and where further improvement is needed. The opportunities to apply the skills they learn in English and mathematics are more established in some areas of the curriculum, such as science. Leaders have identified the need to do more to ensure there are increased opportunities for the application of these skills in history and geography.
- The school's own tracking information reflects that girls tend to make better progress than boys. However, there are more boys than girls in the school and this can make assessment data misleading. Work in books reflects that expectations are equally high for both boys and girls and that some boys make at least similar progress to girls.
- The most able pupils make similar progress to their peers. This means they do not always attain the highest levels of which they are capable. In some classes, expectations of the most able pupils are not high enough to ensure that they go on to reach their potential.
- Pupils attain well in their GCSEs and often reach the targets that have been set for them. However, too few pupils reach the higher levels, reflecting that the most able could do better. Most pupils go on to secure appropriate education, employment or training for their level of ability. Only one pupil has not gone on to secure education, employment or training in the last three years.

## Sixth form provision

**is good**

- The sixth form is new and has established itself as a valued part of Frewen College very quickly. It opened in 2014, utilising the skills of teachers already working at the college and benefiting from useful links with Bexhill College and Plumpton College, both in East Sussex.
- Students attend these placements to complete courses at an appropriate level for their ability. There are strong systems in place to support students. For example, teaching assistants are deployed to accompany students when they attend courses at the link colleges.
- The leadership of the sixth form is highly effective. The leader has ensured that pupils access courses appropriate to their ability, reflected in the particularly strong retention rates. All but one student have maintained and sustained their course placements within the sixth form over the two years it has been open. This year all students have successfully completed the courses they entered.
- Students report positively about the careers advice they have received and how this has helped them decide on their long-term education, employment or training needs. Some students are now making applications to university following their successful pathways through the new sixth form at Frewen. Others have strengthened their plans for employment. For example, one student who has successfully completed a course in hospitality, reported positively about how the careers advice she had received had helped her prepare for the career she was looking to enter when leaving Frewen.
- This is the first year students will finish their sixth form placements and so there is no attainment information about the sixth form as yet. Predictions and assessment information presented by leaders demonstrate that students have made good progress from their starting points. Success rates have been high and support good outcomes.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	114635
<b>Inspection number</b>	10018187
<b>DfE registration number</b>	845/6002

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

<b>Type of school</b>	Other
<b>School status</b>	Independent residential special school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–19
<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>	112
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	24
<b>Number of part-time pupils</b>	0
<b>Number of boarders on roll</b>	37
<b>Proprietor</b>	Frewen Educational Trust Ltd
<b>Chair</b>	Mr John Maudslay
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Nick Goodman
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£14,868–£23,682
<b>Annual fees (boarders)</b>	£22,275–£32,874
<b>Telephone number</b>	01797 252494
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.frewencollege.co.uk">www.frewencollege.co.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:office@frewencollege.co.uk">office@frewencollege.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	17–18 May 2012

## Information about this school

- Frewen College is a residential special school, offering full-time education to male and female pupils between the ages of seven and 19. The school is registered for 130 pupils. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 are taught in the prep school, which is across a road from the main school site. All other pupils are taught in the secondary buildings, which are together on the Frewen house estate.
- The school caters for young people with speech and language difficulties. The main primary need is dyslexia, although several pupils have a range of secondary needs, such as dyspraxia and dyscalculia.
- There are currently 112 pupils on roll, of whom 24 are resident. Just over two thirds of the pupils are boys.
- The school opened in 1947. It was last inspected as part of an integrated inspection in May 2012. The last inspection of residential provision was in December 2015.
- The principal took up his post in September 2014. Since the last inspection there has also been a change in deputy principal, special educational needs coordinator and head of boarding. The school is currently undergoing a restructure of the leadership team.

## Information about this inspection

- This was a full inspection of the school, but did not include an inspection of the boarding provision. The inspection was undertaken following one day's notice.
- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in 19 lessons, including interventions and therapies, across all departments and key stages, the vast majority jointly with a member of the senior leadership team. Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in and around the school and during lessons.
- Meetings were held with senior and middle leaders, those who have responsibility for safeguarding, staff at the school, a group of governors and a group of pupils.
- Inspectors analysed school documentation, including minutes of governing body meetings, the school's self-evaluation, information about staff appraisal, and tracking information about pupils' achievement, attendance and exclusions.
- Safeguarding policies and procedures were scrutinised, including the register for recording checks on staff before recruitment. Records linked to work with other agencies were reviewed, as well as those relating to how the school has responded to complaints.
- School documentation, the outcomes of the inspection and the review of the school premises were all considered against the independent school standards.
- Inspectors considered 30 responses from parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and a confidential letter submitted to the inspection team.

## Inspection team

Matthew Barnes, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Lesley Corbett

Ofsted Inspector



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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

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