

Farrington Community Academy

Allendale Road, Sunderland, Tyne and Wear SR3 3EL

Inspection dates

23–24 November 2016

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Require improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection, leaders have not been holding teachers to account in a sufficiently robust manner for the quality of their teaching or the progress that their pupils have made.
- GCSE results in 2015 and 2016 indicated that almost all groups of pupils had underachieved, particularly in humanities. The proportion of pupils achieving the highest grades was too low.
- Teaching, learning and pupils' progress across the curriculum are very variable and short of being consistently good.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils should and can achieve are often not high enough.
- In some lessons, teachers do not use the school's assessment information sufficiently well to stretch and challenge pupils of all abilities, especially the most able.
- Some teachers do not plan to cover sufficient work in lessons and so the rate at which pupils learn is often too slow.
- Although diminishing, there is still a large difference between the progress of disadvantaged pupils and that of other pupils with the same starting points.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities outside the specialist provision for autism often underachieve.

The school has the following strengths

- GCSE results in some subjects, for example English and mathematics, have improved.
- A far more robust system of target setting and assessment is beginning to help leaders to improve achievement.
- Progress in some subjects such as art, physical education and technology is consistently good.
- Pupils supported by the school's specialist provision for autism make good progress from their starting points.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strong feature. Pupils' behaviour is good.
- Welfare arrangements are good. Safeguarding arrangements meet all requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement to consistently good or better by:
 - making sure that teachers make best use of the time available and give pupils the right amount of work and ensure that they complete it to a good standard
 - providing more challenging work for the school's most able pupils to enable more of them to achieve the highest grades at GCSE
 - making better use of the school's assessment information in lessons to provide pupils of all abilities with suitably challenging work
 - ensuring that the school's disadvantaged pupils make at least as much progress as other pupils nationally from similar starting points
 - providing more effective support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities to enable them to make consistently good progress.
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
 - making sure that leaders and managers hold teachers fully to account for pupils' progress
 - tackling in a robust manner the weaker performing subject areas, especially history, geography and religious studies.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leadership and management at all levels have not been effective enough in the period since the last inspection. Weaknesses in teaching and progress remain because they have not been tackled either quickly enough or with sufficient rigour.
- Where weaknesses have been identified, actions to remedy them have been too slow in having sufficient impact. Senior and middle leaders have not called teachers to account effectively when it has been clear that pupils have been underachieving.
- The lack of rigour in tackling weaknesses in teaching contributed to the GCSE results of 2015 and 2016 where most groups of pupils underachieved in many of the subjects they had studied.
- There is still inconsistency in the middle managers' leadership of their subjects. Several are still not tackling weaknesses in teaching and ensuring that pupils are progressing well.
- Senior leaders know that the 2015 and 2016 GCSE results were not good enough. They have produced a suitable action plan to tackle areas of concern but it is too early yet to judge the impact of this work.
- There are other emerging strengths in leadership. The relatively recently introduced data collection system enables leaders to identify quickly groups of pupils and individuals who are underachieving and take action.
- Better leadership in some subjects, particularly in English and mathematics, is beginning to overcome the legacy of previous underachievement and lift attainment.
- Very strong and effective leadership of the school's specialist provision for pupils on the autism spectrum ensures that they make good progress across the curriculum. Pupils in this provision go to lessons with other pupils in all subjects but with the assistance of skilled classroom assistants. They also receive bespoke lessons to target their particular needs.
- Increasingly effective use of the pupil premium funding following a review is enabling the school's disadvantaged pupils to progress at a faster rate than previously. Imaginative and successful use of the Year 7 catch-up funding enables pupils who transferred to the school with relatively low attainment to benefit from teaching in small groups. Their reading has improved substantially.
- The broad and balanced curriculum enables pupils to study a wide range of subjects in Years 7 to 9 and at GCSE. Work in the classroom is supplemented by a good range of extra-curricular activities. These include many visits, as well as the valuable link with Gambia. These activities and visits help to underpin the strong programme of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development that pervades the school.
- Equal opportunities have a high profile. Leaders find funding to ensure that no pupils are disadvantaged by being unable to afford visits. Where members of staff perceive that pupils need personal advice and help they are always prepared to spend time to eliminate problems where they can. However, more work still needs to be done to eliminate differences between the performance of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils.

- The school provides pupils with plenty of opportunity to study life in modern Britain. Pupils speak with confidence about Parliament, democracy, law-making and tolerance. They understand cultural differences in the population of Britain and know about different religious faiths. Hence, they are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Parents and carers have a positive view of the school. It is currently fully staffed and has no major difficulty in appointing and retaining teachers and classroom assistants.

Governance of the school

- Governance is a developing area and is now improving quickly in response to a recent review of its effectiveness. Governors fully understand their responsibilities and have adopted a far more proactive role than previously.
- Governors are benefiting from training and are now beginning to probe, challenge and support more effectively than previously.
- The governing body understands how the pupil premium funding is used and to what extent it is having an impact on raising attainment.
- Governors play their part in ensuring that performance management arrangements follow intended procedures.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective because there are good systems in place which members of staff follow consistently. Safeguarding has a high profile in the culture and daily life of the school. The checking of the identities of all adults who have access to pupils is extremely accurate and effective.
- Good levels of adult supervision when pupils are moving around the site enable pupils to feel safe at all times. Pupils confirm that they feel safe in school and that it teaches them effectively about e-safety, and other potential threats to their welfare such as drugs or radicalisation.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching has not improved enough since the previous inspection to ensure that pupils make consistently good progress in enough of the subjects that they study.
- Many of the weaknesses identified two years ago remain because leaders have not monitored lessons with sufficient rigour.
- Expectations of pupils are often not high enough, especially of the most able. Consequently, the proportion of the highest GCSE grades is too low. Quite frequently, tasks are not well enough matched to pupils' ability. Teachers often allow pupils to take far too much time with tasks so the pace of learning is frequently too slow.
- Teaching is still not ensuring that all groups of pupils overcome the previous legacy of underachievement. For example, disadvantaged pupils are still behind where they should be in Years 10 and 11. This is particularly true in humanities where work is often poorly presented.
- Although the school provides teachers with plenty of accurate assessment information on pupils' progress and attainment, they sometimes fail to use it effectively in their planning of tasks to meet the needs of pupils of all abilities.

- Approaches used for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities educated outside the supervision of the specialist provision do not always enable them to progress well enough. This is often because they do not benefit from the level of individual help provided for other pupils who need it.
- Examination of books and observations indicate that in some subjects, pupils' learning is more effective. For example, higher expectations and well-planned work in art, design and technology and physical education enables pupils to progress well. Improving quality of teaching in English, science and mathematics means that in many lessons in these subjects a good pace of learning is helping to lift attainment.
- Some lessons proceed at a quick pace, enabling pupils to learn rapidly. In these lessons teachers' instructions and explanations are clear and they use their electronic whiteboards well to present tasks. They involve all of the pupils in question and answer sessions yet allow them just enough time to complete tasks if they work quickly.
- Highly skilled teaching of pupils allocated to the specialist provision for autism enables them to learn quickly and progress at least as fast as other pupils nationally from the same starting points in Year 7. For example, a mixed-age class of pupils in Years 7 to 9 made rapid progress with negative numbers because the teacher presented his lesson in a compelling, vibrant and very effective manner. Teaching assistants allocated to the autism provision play a strong and effective role in helping the autistic pupils to achieve well.
- The teaching of reading across the school is exceptionally effective. Where pupils join Year 7 with reading ability significantly below that expected for their ages, the school ensures that expert and effective teaching really lifts their ability in terms of word recognition and comprehension so they can all read and understand GCSE examination texts by Years 10 and 11. By Year 11, the most able pupils read with impressive fluency and understanding.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils become much more mature and confident as they move from Year 7 to Year 11, by which time they are generally well prepared for the next stage in their education, apprenticeships or the world of work. As they move through the school, pupils do become more effective learners, especially in the run-up to GCSE examinations. However, they are still relatively dependent on their teachers, even in Year 11, because the development of independent study skills is often quite limited.
- The very effective programme of spiritual, moral, social and cultural education underpins the entire curriculum and pupils gain from it in terms of their personal development in many ways. It provides a rich source of extra-curricular activities and visits which broaden pupils' experiences, enabling them to make new friends and to develop new skills. The Young Leaders who support sporting activities in primary schools, fund-raising projects for Shelter, visiting theatre groups and individual tuition in music are all examples of activities which help to increase pupils' confidence.

- Pupils, parents and carers really do value the amount of help and support that members of staff provide. Pupils know that there is always someone on hand to listen and advise when needed.
- Pupils all say that they feel safe in school and that bullying of any type is rare. They are confident that members of staff would deal with it promptly and effectively if it should arise.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are polite and welcoming. They fully respect the adults who work with them and relate well to visitors. They conduct themselves well when moving between lessons and when socialising at breaks and lunchtimes. Pupils pay due regard to the safety of others.
- In class, pupils are keen to learn and generally cooperate well with their teachers and classroom assistants. They listen carefully to teachers' explanations and instructions and get on with their work without fuss. Very occasionally a few pupils misbehave in class but this is usually because the pace of learning is too slow.
- Pupils themselves confirmed that unacceptable conduct is rare and that they have every confidence that members of staff would deal with it effectively if it should occur.
- Attendance of pupils is broadly average but, despite the school doing all that it can, persistent absence of a small number of disadvantaged pupils is still too high. The school monitors the attendance and behaviour of the very small number of pupils attending alternative provision well.

Outcomes for pupils

Require improvement

- In 2016, the GCSE examination results showed that almost all groups of pupils had underachieved across the curriculum. They had underachieved particularly in English, mathematics and the humanities subjects. Boys, girls, pupils with special educational needs outside the specialist provision, disadvantaged pupils and higher- and lower-ability pupils all underachieved. An average proportion of higher-ability pupils joined Year 7 with this cohort, but the proportion of A* or A graded results at GCSE was well below the national average.
- In 2016, although having reduced compared with the year before, there was still a large difference between the performance in GCSE examinations of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils. Provisional data shows that the school's disadvantaged pupils, especially the most able, did not fare as well as other pupils nationally with similar starting points.
- In the current Years 10 and 11, there is still a legacy of underachievement from previous years. This is evident in pupils' work in books and in the school's own assessment information. The underachievement is particularly evident in pupils' work in the humanities subjects. Higher-ability pupils, disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and or disabilities, educated outside the school's specialist provision, are still not achieving highly enough. Pupils are not yet catching up quickly

enough because the quality of teaching is not yet good enough to fully overcome previous underachievement.

- Nevertheless, outcomes are improving. GCSE examination results in 2016 reflected better achievement for pupils than in previous years. Accurate assessment data shows that pupils in the current Year 11 are making better progress across the curriculum than the previous cohort. Weaknesses in achievement in English and mathematics are reducing because more pupils are producing work consistent with higher GCSE grades than previously.
- In all year groups, the overall rate of pupils' progress across the curriculum is beginning to quicken in response to more challenging target setting and a general acceptance among teachers and classroom assistants that pupils can and must make better progress over time.
- Pupils are making good progress in art, technology and physical education and increasingly so in English, mathematics and science. The differences between the performance of the school's current disadvantaged pupils and others with similar starting points are gradually reducing.
- Pupils who are registered with the specialist provision for autism make good progress because they are supported consistently well by a well-organised and effective team of teachers and classroom assistants.

School details

Unique reference number	139852
Local authority	Sunderland
Inspection number	10019760

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

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	782
Appropriate authority	Brighter Academies Trust
Chair	Glynis Hossack
Headteacher	Howard Kemp
Telephone number	01915 536 013
Website	http://www.farringdonschool.co.uk/
Email address	enquiries@farringdonca.net
Date of previous inspection	16–17 September 2014

Information about this school

- Farringdon Community Academy is smaller than the average secondary school.
- It is run by the Brighter Academies Trust.
- Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- There are very few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- There is specialist provision of 36 places for pupils with autism spectrum disorders.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average.
- An average proportion of pupils are supported through pupil premium funding.
- A very small number of pupils attend alternative provision at the Link School and the Beacon of Light Free School.

- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment at GCSE.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 31 lessons, including eight jointly with senior leaders, and looked at a wide range of pupils' written work.
- They heard pupils of all abilities reading, including several from the specialist autism provision.
- They held meetings with the headteacher, senior staff, middle leaders, the leader of the special provision for autism, the special educational needs coordinator, groups of pupils, a group of governors and a representative of the Brighter Academies Trust.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of documentation, including the school's review of its performance, development planning, records of pupils' progress, safeguarding procedures and incident logs.
- Inspectors took account of 17 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, 33 responses to the staff questionnaire, 70 responses to the pupils' questionnaire and 17 free text messages from parents.

Inspection team

John Paddick, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Paul Wellford	Ofsted Inspector
Julie McGrane	Ofsted Inspector
Shelley Heseltine	Ofsted Inspector

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