

Framwellgate School Durham

Newton Drive, Framwellgate Moor, Durham DH1 5BQ

Inspection dates

1–2 May 2018

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Following the last inspection, former school leaders did not take robust action to prevent a decline in pupils' progress. A legacy of weak teaching continues to affect the learning of current pupils. Consequently, pupils' progress is uneven across subject areas and requires improvement.
- Groups of pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils and the most able pupils, make less progress than pupils nationally.
- Despite recent improvements, the quality of teaching remains inconsistent across the school. Some teachers do not use assessment information effectively enough to plan challenging activities for pupils in lessons.
- Some teachers' expectations of what pupils can do and achieve are too low, particularly at key stage 3.
- Leaders and governors do not check carefully that the additional funding for Year 7 pupils who need to catch up, and for those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, is making a difference.
- Although most pupils attend well, some disadvantaged pupils are regularly absent from school.

The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher, supported by a recently-appointed and skilled senior team, has brought much-needed drive and ambition to the school. In a short period of time, they have tackled a significant number of weaknesses effectively.
- Pupils' behaviour, sixth-form achievement and pupils' progress in English and mathematics have improved. The quality of teaching is also improving.
- Pupils behave very well around the school. Most are attentive in lessons and show respect for each other's opinions. Parents and pupils value the high level of support provided by the school's pastoral team.
- The sixth form is good. Most students make strong progress in their chosen studies. They are well supported to go on to higher education, training or employment.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that pupils make at least good progress across year groups and subjects, particularly the most able, by:
 - embedding the school’s new assessment and tracking processes, so that teachers can check pupils’ progress accurately and intervene promptly to improve pupils’ achievement
 - ensuring that teachers use the information they have about pupils’ prior knowledge, skills and understanding to plan challenging activities for all groups of pupils
 - delivering an effective programme for improving pupils’ literacy and numeracy
 - checking that pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are well supported in lessons
 - continuing to raise all teachers’ expectations of what pupils can achieve, particularly at key stage 3.
- Improve the progress and attendance of disadvantaged pupils by:
 - ensuring that disadvantaged pupils achieve at least as well as other pupils with the same starting points
 - reducing the proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are regularly absent from school.
- Improve further the quality of leadership and governance, by:
 - ensuring that governors develop a secure understanding of how additional funding is used to support disadvantaged pupils, pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and pupils who arrive in Year 7 needing to catch up

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The school's former leaders did not take enough action to address the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. Consequently, the quality of teaching, pupils' behaviour and pupils' progress all declined. Since September 2017, the new headteacher has begun to transform the school. He has taken decisive and successful action to raise the expectations of staff and pupils alike.
- In a short period of time, the headteacher has recruited an experienced and talented new senior leadership team. They have led rapid improvements in teaching and in pupils' behaviour. The climate in the school is optimistic and aspirational. Pupils are respectful towards each other, and most pupils are keen to learn. The sixth form is now good, and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment are all improving quickly.
- The headteacher has forged positive relationships with all members of the school community. Parents, pupils and staff welcome the additional challenge and ambition which the headteacher has brought to the school. Nearly all parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, said that the school is well led. Many parents commented on how happy their children are at school.
- Leaders are ambitious to improve pupils' progress rapidly. They have a detailed and accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Their planned actions are well considered and clearly communicated to staff and pupils. Leaders have recently engaged the local authority, and other high-achieving schools, to support them in improving the school quickly.
- The curriculum is well planned, providing a wide range of courses and qualifications to meet pupils' needs and interests. Several work-related subjects prepare pupils well for their next steps in education, training and employment. Careers guidance is also well organised, with opportunities for pupils to explore their interests and learn about different employment routes. Regular visitors provide pupils with an insight into different career pathways.
- Leaders have reviewed the school curriculum to make it more challenging, particularly at key stage 3. They have also improved the school's systems for assessing and tracking pupils' progress so that they are accurate and reliable. These changes are in their early stages. However, they are already beginning to raise pupils' and teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- The school's programme for promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well organised. Assemblies, the 'STEP' programme (tutorials) and 'drop down' days are used to engage pupils in reflecting on themselves as citizens within the wider community. Topics such as law, democracy and tolerance involve pupils in discussing what it means to be British in a culturally diverse society.
- Leaders check the quality of teaching, learning and assessment rigorously. Senior leaders have tackled the weakest teaching and subject leadership found at the last inspection. They provide targeted support and appropriate professional development for teachers. Although there is still some variability within subjects, teaching is now

improving.

- Teachers value leaders' increased focus on their professional development. Training is well planned, and teachers are keen to develop their practice. Teachers now have regular opportunities to share best practice and to develop their skills. Increasingly, teachers are working with other high-performing schools locally to develop their teaching skills.
- Leaders have rightly prioritised the progress of pupils in the current Year 11. Intensive revision programmes are addressing some of the gaps which pupils have in their knowledge and understanding. Consequently, pupils' progress in Year 11 is improving across all subjects, particularly in English and mathematics.
- Leaders agree that, in the past, the additional pupil premium funding provided to support disadvantaged pupils has not been used effectively. Consequently, they have reviewed the school's action plan, and identified pupils' barriers to learning. Teachers and leaders know what they need to do to ensure that disadvantaged pupils make much better progress than they have done in the past two years.
- The school has put in place several strategies to encourage pupils to read widely and often. Some pupils are also given additional support to improve their reading skills. However, the programme to support pupils who arrive at the school in Year 7 needing to catch up, in English and mathematics, is not well planned. Leaders are not clear about how well the additional funding is used and whether it is making a difference. This is also true of the funding provided to support pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. Although this group are receiving support to meet their emotional needs, leaders do not track their academic progress carefully.

Governance of the school

- Following the last inspection, a review of governance enabled the trust and the governing body to reflect on their practice. The responsibilities of the trust, and the governing committees, are now clear. Governors challenge leaders and hold them to account.
- Governors engage in a wide range of training to ensure that they have the skills to be effective. This has recently included training on safeguarding, teaching and learning, and understanding pupil-progress information.
- Governors are committed to bringing about improvement. They routinely check pupils' progress in key stage 4. They also discuss reports on pupils' behaviour and attendance. For example, when attendance 'dipped' at the beginning of this year, the minutes of governing body meetings show that they challenged school leaders about how this was going to be tackled promptly, and it was.
- Governors are aware that the additional pupil premium has been not been used effectively in the past. They have challenged leaders to make improvements. However, they have not checked how well the additional catch-up funding for Year 7 pupils is used, nor do they have a detailed understanding of how funding is used to support pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders ensure that all the appropriate checks are carried out on staff before they start work in the school. Staff are well trained in safeguarding procedures and regularly updated on any changes. Staff report concerns appropriately and there is a strong culture of vigilance across the school. Leaders recently organised an external check on all safeguarding procedures to ensure that they are robust, and the findings were very positive.
- The designated safeguarding leader is very experienced and highly skilled. Her record-keeping is meticulous. She accesses support from other local agencies to improve pupils' personal development and welfare, as appropriate.
- Pupils who attend alternative provision off site are well looked after. The designated safeguarding leader visits all placements regularly. She checks that the pupils are attending regularly and making good progress and carries out risk assessments to make sure that pupils are kept safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching is improving across the curriculum but remains variable within subject areas. This is because some teachers do not take full account of pupils' starting points when they plan learning activities. When the work set is not challenging enough, some pupils do not make good progress, particularly the most able pupils.
- Some teachers' expectations of pupils are too low. The quality of pupils' presentation in books is variable and, in some groups, pupils are not given enough opportunity to develop their extended writing skills. This is particularly the case in key stage 3, where the curriculum has not been demanding enough in the past.
- Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are not developed well across the curriculum. Teachers do not routinely encourage pupils to improve their reading or writing. There is currently no coherent plan for developing pupils' mathematical skills. For example, when pupils are asked to use their numeracy skills in science or geography, they struggle to apply some of the approaches they might have used in mathematics.
- Nevertheless, due to effective professional development, teachers' expectations are rising. For example, most teachers use questioning to probe pupils' thinking, encouraging them to articulate and justify their ideas. Most teachers check pupils' understanding carefully and correct any misconceptions. Some teachers reshape pupils' learning when they see that pupils have already mastered skills and need to move onto more-challenging work.
- Teaching in mathematics is improving rapidly because of effective subject leadership and more stable staffing. Some pupils in key stage 4 are still working on topics and skills which they should have mastered at key stage 3. However, pupils engage positively with their teachers to make the necessary improvements. The subject leader has also reviewed the maths curriculum so that pupils are now developing their problem-solving skills effectively.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils said that bullying is rare and is dealt with effectively by staff. They know who to go to if they have concerns. Some pupils have been appointed, and trained, as anti-bullying ambassadors so that they can support more vulnerable pupils.
- Pupils said that they feel safe in school. Many parents commented that staff know their children well and that the school's pastoral team provides excellent support for pupils.
- Pupils have a secure understanding of the potential dangers of using social media and are clear about how to keep themselves safe online. They have received useful lessons on how to avoid criminal behaviour and they understand the potential dangers within their local community. They have also explored topics such as mental health issues and the importance of healthy lifestyles.
- Pupils spoke enthusiastically about the wide range of extra-curricular activities, clubs and educational visits available to them. Participating in these activities, at lunchtime or after school, enables them to develop wider social skills and leadership skills. These include many sporting activities, including fencing and surfing, as well as cultural activities in art, music and drama. The school is keen to promote an understanding of science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) so there are several clubs in which pupils can discover new learning, and investigate careers, in these subjects.
- Pupils who attend alternative provision off site, part time, are well cared for. The programmes they take part in are well chosen and motivate them to achieve their potential. Since starting this provision, their behaviour, attendance and progress have all improved.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are proud of their school and there is a very positive atmosphere. Pupils are thoughtful, and respectful towards adults and each other.
- Pupils conduct themselves well around the school site. Pupils said that behaviour has improved markedly since the new headteacher arrived in September. Staff and parents agree.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Their use of praise and rewards encourages pupils' positive attitudes. Most pupils are keen to learn. They follow instructions promptly and are willing to contribute in lessons. Very occasionally, there is some off-task behaviour, by a small number of boys, when the work is not challenging enough. When necessary, teachers use the school's behaviour policy effectively so that little time is lost through any off-task behaviour.
- Overall, pupils' attendance is average. Following a recent 'dip' in attendance, leaders introduced a range of new strategies to engage the pupils who are regularly absent from school. These strategies are having a positive impact. The attendance of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is improving and fewer of this group are now regularly absent. However, leaders know that there is more to do to reduce the proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are regularly absent.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- In 2016 and in 2017, pupils' progress overall, and in most subjects, was below average. The school's progress information and the work in pupils' books show that the current Year 10 and Year 11 pupils did not make enough progress in key stage 3 and are now having to catch up.
- Over time, the achievement of disadvantaged pupils has been well below the average for other pupils nationally, overall and in most subjects. Additional funding is now targeted more effectively and there are early signs that their progress and attainment are improving in both English and mathematics.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities made better progress in 2017 than in 2016. However, these pupils are not always supported well enough in lessons to enable them to make similar progress to that of other pupils with the same starting points.
- Pupils who join the school with weak literacy skills in Year 7 receive some support to help them catch up, but this is not well coordinated or measured, therefore leaders do not know which strategies are working or not. Pupils with weak numeracy skills do not currently receive adequate provision, although there are plans in place to address this.
- Over time, the most able pupils have not made good progress across several subjects. A lower proportion of pupils attain the top grades than could be expected. Leaders acknowledge that there is further work to do to raise the aspirations of these pupils, particularly the most able boys. Leaders also know that some teaching still lacks sufficient challenge.
- In 2017, pupils' progress improved in English. However, the school's progress information shows that gaps between boys' and girls' progress remain in English.
- Improved teaching and leadership in mathematics is helping most pupils to make rapid gains in their knowledge and understanding, but from a low starting point.
- Although pupils' progress remains variable across subjects, the work in pupils' books shows that current pupils are making better progress than in the past. In most subjects, standards of attainment are improving because assessment is more rigorous, and teachers' expectations are rising.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- Leadership of the sixth form is good. The recently appointed leader has established robust systems for checking pupils' progress and attendance. Students and parents commented positively on the impact of interventions when students are falling behind with their studies. Students' attendance was below average at the beginning of the year but is now improving rapidly.
- Students on both academic and applied general programmes make good progress from their starting points. There are a small number of A-level subjects where performance has been inconsistent in the past. Leaders have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses across subject areas because they check the quality of teaching frequently. Leaders provide appropriate training for teachers, and timely support for

students, where needed.

- Pass rates for those students who need to retake GCSE English and/or mathematics qualifications are above average. These students benefit from specialist teaching.
- Teachers have high expectations of students in the sixth form. Teaching is tailored well to students' interests and prior knowledge. Teachers have secure subject knowledge. They also know the students well and plan effectively to challenge students' thinking. Students collaborate well with each other, gaining confidence from debating current issues and exploring complex concepts.
- Retention rates between Year 12 and 13 are high. Students said they benefited from high-quality advice and guidance when they were in Year 11. Consequently, they chose their subject options carefully and very few made any changes mid-course. Students also value the support given to them by their subject teachers.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well through the 'STEP' programme (tutorials). This programme provides opportunities for students to engage in discussions about cultural issues and to reflect on how to keep themselves safe. Students take part in a range of opportunities to contribute to the wider school and local communities. For example, some students support younger pupils in the school, by coaching younger pupils in sport or listening to younger pupils read.
- Leaders track students' destinations carefully. Students spoke highly of the opportunities to take part in relevant work experience. They can also apply for an 'internship', supported by local businesses, to develop their employability skills further. All students are well supported to make their university applications or to apply for apprenticeships. They demonstrate high aspirations and confidence in their ability to secure suitable university places or to follow appropriate career pathways in the future.

School details

Unique reference number	137696
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10036559

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 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,014
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	123
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Derek Hall
Headteacher	Andy Byers
Telephone number	0191 386 6628
Website	www.framdurham.com
Email address	byers.a@framdurham.com
Date of previous inspection	10–11 November 2015

Information about this school

- Framwellgate School is an average-sized secondary academy with a sixth form. It is a single school within The Excel Partnership Trust, with a board of trustees and a local governing body.
- A new headteacher was appointed in September 2017. The senior leadership team was appointed during the Autumn Term 2017.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is also below average.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.

- A small number of pupils attend alternative provision on one of five different programmes: The Woodlands; Home on the Range; Five Palms; The Stadium of Light and provision organised by the local authority's Education Health Needs Team.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited a range of lessons across year groups and subject areas. Many of the observations in lessons were carried out with senior leaders from the school.
- Meetings were held with senior and subject leaders, teachers, governors and trustees.
- Inspectors held informal and formal discussions with pupils, observed pupils in their 'STEP' groups (tutorials) and observed pupils during social times.
- Inspectors listened to a group of pupils read.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of evidence, including the school's self-evaluation, plans for improvement, analyses of pupil performance, attendance and behaviour records and safeguarding files.
- Examples of pupils' books were looked at in detail. This included pupils of different abilities and year groups.
- Inspectors took account of the 104 responses from parents who completed Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and the 176 free-text responses from parents. Seventy-three members of staff completed Ofsted's online staff questionnaire. Seventy-four pupils responded to Ofsted's online pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

Lynn Kenworthy, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Nick Horn	Ofsted Inspector
Stephen Crossley	Ofsted Inspector
Stuart Cleary	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
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Manchester
M1 2WD

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