

Faringdon Community College

Fernham Road, Faringdon, Oxfordshire SN7 7LB

Inspection dates

26 to 27 February 2019

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	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders are deeply committed to doing their very best for pupils. Staff support this ethos wholeheartedly. Their ambitious and determined work supports high standards of care and attainment across the school.
- Leaders have a wealth of information about standards in the school. This directs their work well, but not as precisely as it might. Consequently, less successful aspects of the school, such as progress of disadvantaged pupils, improve gradually rather than quickly.
- Governors and trustees challenge leaders successfully about the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' outcomes. The trust's capacity to support the school effectively has been strengthened further by recent personnel recruitment.
- Pupils are engaged by effective teaching that, overall, helps them to make good progress. Teachers use their strong subject knowledge to plan useful learning experiences for pupils. Leaders' vision for making teaching even better is underdeveloped.
- Typically, standards are high. Overall, pupils' attainment by the end of Year 11 is above national comparators. However, some disadvantaged pupils do not attain as well as other pupils nationally, reflecting below-average progress from their starting points.
- Pupils benefit from rich and varied opportunities that support their taught curriculum well. As a result, their personal development is very strong, and they are equipped very well for life beyond school.
- Careers information and guidance is well developed. Pupils receive timely and impartial advice that guides their next steps successfully. As a result, high numbers stay in education, employment or training at the end of Year 11.
- Pupils respond well to teachers' high expectations. They conduct themselves well and work hard in lessons. An atmosphere of respect and courtesy is evident throughout.
- Safeguarding is effective. Pupils' welfare is at the heart of the school's work. Leaders ensure staff are knowledgeable and vigilant regarding risks to pupils' safety. Their swift actions are successful in protecting vulnerable pupils.
- Disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well looked after. However, some do not attend school as often as they should, which affects their progress.
- Provision in the sixth form is good. Students experience a suitably broad academic curriculum that is taught well. Leaders' determined actions have addressed recent underachievement successfully.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build on leaders' current work with disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND so that:
 - these groups of pupils attend school as regularly as other pupils do
 - disadvantaged pupils attain as highly by the end of Year 11 as their non-disadvantaged peers in school and nationally
 - pupils with SEND make strong progress that helps them to catch up from their lower academic starting points.
- Improve how leaders use what they know about standards in the school to direct their future actions more precisely so that:
 - strengths in teaching and learning are shared and developed efficiently
 - areas of the school that most need to develop do so quickly.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher unites staff with a common sense of purpose in order to nurture pupils and help them to achieve their very best. Adults demonstrate their high expectations for pupils by modelling them through their actions. Pupils respond appropriately well and a culture of mutual respect, equality and high aspiration ensues.
- Pupils experience a suitably broad curriculum. Leaders plan long-term learning carefully, using expertise from primary school colleagues from within the trust to help them to build on what pupils know, understand and can do by the end of key stage 2. In English, leaders' plans to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils through the type and quality of learning they are exposed to are particularly well developed.
- Opportunities for learning and experiences beyond the taught curriculum are many and varied. Pupils participate enthusiastically in a wide range of activities, including those linked to sports and the arts. During the inspection, a large group of pupils were engaging keenly in final rehearsals for the school production 'Popstars, the 90s musical'. Their confidence and enthusiasm were palpable, supported capably by their teachers.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted successfully. Pupils demonstrate a secure understanding of fundamental British values, such as mutual respect and individual liberty. They relish opportunities to develop their leadership skills and to contribute to the life of the school. The school's ongoing association with the Defence Academy adds a unique dimension, with pupils visiting from overseas for a short period of time. Pupils who are only at the school for a short period are looked after well, with pupils sharing in and learning about each other's different cultures.
- Leaders know the school's many strengths and are honest about the priorities for development. They take helpful steps to address areas of relative weakness, which improve as a result. At times, they do not step back and reflect as strategically as they could about the difference some of the school's work is making. Consequently, some improvements do not happen as quickly as they could.
- Leaders gather a wealth of useful information about the quality of teaching across the school and over time. They use it well, but not as precisely as they might, to prioritise training and development. Teachers make effective use of helpful opportunities to share their expertise within and beyond their subject areas. Leaders access expertise from across and beyond the trust to support staff training, enhancing these opportunities over time through forging links with other secondary schools.
- Additional funding for disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND is used appropriately. Leaders understand pupils' complex, and sometimes sensitive, needs very well. Their work enables potentially vulnerable pupils to develop their social and emotional skills successfully. The impact of this funding on pupils' academic progress is less consistently strong over time. Some make very good progress, others less so.
- Pupils who join Year 7 needing to catch up in English or mathematics are supported well. Staff match extra help closely to pupils' identified areas of weakness. Leaders monitor the impact of this additional support carefully. Pupils make good progress with

their reading, writing and mathematics skills as a result of this focused work.

Governance of the school

- Faringdon Academy of Schools oversees the governance of the school. Trustees and members of the local governing body work closely together to ensure that their legal duties are met. They bring suitable skills and experience to their collective role.
- Governors have a secure understanding of the school's current priorities for improvement. They provide a constructive balance of challenge and practical support to school leaders, drawing from their own expertise. Their recent work demonstrates decisive and effective action that is strengthening leadership further. The trust's work to manage a recent and major building project has successfully prevented this distracting school leaders from their core purpose of providing a high quality of education and care for pupils.
- Collectively, governors focus appropriately on how well pupils are doing. They analyse carefully each year's examination results at the end of key stages 4 and 5, holding leaders to account for standards in the school. The depth of their focus on current pupils' progress from their relative starting points is less rigorous, but is developing.
- Governors share leaders' frustration that work to improve educational outcomes for disadvantaged pupils has been slow to have an impact. They give careful thought to reviewing the difference that additional funding makes to disadvantaged pupils' school experience. They rightly identify the positive difference that the school's work makes to disadvantaged pupils' welfare and self-esteem, which supports their engagement with learning. Their focus is increasing how successfully leaders' actions lead to better progress for disadvantaged pupils.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Nurture and promoting pupils' welfare are absolute strengths of the school. Pupils' well-being is first and foremost in leaders' minds. Consequently, pupils report feeling safe and well looked after in school.
- Pupils are taught well about how to keep themselves safe. The high-quality personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) programme develops their thinking in an age-appropriate way and in response to priorities that emerge in the local area. As a result, pupils demonstrate a mature approach to managing risks.
- Leaders ensure that the strong culture of safeguarding is supported by relevant policies and effective training for staff and governors. This promotes an air of vigilance, particularly around those pupils who are potentially the most vulnerable.
- Staff act swiftly and appropriately where concerns emerge about pupils' welfare, making necessary but sometimes difficult decisions for the benefit of the child. This ensures that pupils get prompt access to the help they need. Leaders keep careful records of their work around safeguarding, enabling them to know, understand and meet pupils' needs successfully.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers have consistently strong subject knowledge. They use it well to plan lessons that stimulate pupils' interests and develop their knowledge, skills and understanding appropriately over time. As a result, most pupils make good progress and attain well by the end of key stages 4 and 5.
- Throughout the school, the environment is conducive to learning. Pupils work hard, responding well to teachers' high expectations for their behaviour and engagement. Consequently, time in lessons is used productively.
- Parents feel well-informed about the progress their children are making. Pupils know what they need to do to improve in their different subjects. They find their homework to be valuable and supportive of their learning in lessons. They engage usefully with the beneficial feedback they receive from teachers, in line with the school's policy. This enables them to make good progress over time.
- Leaders are investing sensibly in developing their 'key performance indicators', which map out what pupils are expected to know, understand and be able to do as they move through the school. This supports staff well in planning to meet pupils' emerging needs and in responding to leaders' current focus on increasing levels of challenge. This is well established in English, art, drama and in information and communication technology (ICT), where pupils experience vibrant teaching that encourages them to think deeply.
- Pupils report feeling challenged by their work, particularly in science and Spanish. Teachers plan opportunities for pupils to work at different levels and to think more deeply. Pupils are not always directed precisely to work that matches their different starting points, so some do not strive as much as they could towards meeting their teachers' high aspirations for their achievement.
- Leaders have invested in promoting reading through effective and deliberate opportunities within the taught curriculum. Teachers monitor standards in reading and spelling carefully, identifying where pupils may need extra help or encouragement. Leaders are in the early stages of looking at how well standards in reading are improving as a result of their recent focus on this aspect of the school's work. The impact on the developing culture of reading across the school is evident. The library is a vibrant space that pupils visit increasingly often and book loans have doubled over the past three years.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Leaders' work to support vulnerable pupils is a particular strength. Specific pastoral support work, such as through the Attainment Inclusion Mentoring centre, is valued greatly by pupils. They are nurtured sensitively through periods of significant personal challenge, and their self-esteem improves notably as a result.
- Pupils experience rich opportunities that support their personal development

successfully. They play their part in enhancing the school community, for example by taking their turn to be part of the 'happy to help' team or being a 'visible leader'. Pupils' understanding of important issues such as human rights and civil liberties lead them to behave maturely and considerately towards each other. This contributes to a highly tolerant atmosphere around the school, where pupils are confident to be themselves.

- Leaders invest heavily in preparing pupils for their next steps. Pupils experience an extensive and effective range of careers information and guidance that fuels their ambition and raises their aspirations. Consequently, almost all pupils move on successfully to employment, education or training, either at the end of key stage 4 or when they conclude their time in the sixth form.
- Children in care are supported extremely well at school. Leaders make comprehensive provision for their care and development, using additional funding effectively to support their work. They work closely with the local authority to check how pupils are doing, taking the views of pupils and their carers sensitively into account. As a result, children in care engage well with their learning and make good progress.
- A very small number of pupils are supported via alternative provision. Leaders match placements very closely to pupils' social, emotional and learning needs. As a result, pupils respond very well to their placement experience, gaining vital skills and experience that contribute positively to their academic success.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils conduct themselves very well around the site. Some are highly respectful and self-managing. Others respond positively to leaders' clear expectations, supported by appropriate sanctions. Consequently, there is an air of calm, both within lessons and during social time.
- Overall, pupils attend school regularly, including those at alternative provision. However, disadvantaged pupils do not attend as well as they should. Leaders persist in their efforts to reduce persistent absence, particularly for the disadvantaged and pupils with SEND. Improvements are gradual, despite leaders' best efforts.
- Almost all pupils feel that bullying is not an issue at their school. Bullying either does not happen or is managed very well by staff if it does. A very small minority of pupils and parents do not share this view.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Overall, pupils learn well throughout their time at the school. By the end of Year 11, they attain standards that compare favourably with pupils in other schools. This demonstrates the good progress that pupils make across most of their subjects.
- Over time, progress and attainment in mathematics are consistently strong. This is a result of the effective teaching they experience as a matter of routine. Progress in science by the end of Year 11 improved dramatically last year and was above average.
- For the past two years, progress in English by the end of Year 11 has been below the national average, although attainment was slightly above. Leaders describe being slow

to adjust to the increasing demands of the new GCSE specifications. Provision in English has been overhauled as a result in order to ensure that pupils are challenged sufficiently from when they arrive in Year 7. Consequently, progress in English is now much improved, and it is very strong in some year groups.

- Pupils needing to catch up in English and mathematics make good progress throughout Year 7 as a result of the extra and appropriate help that they receive. Consequently, pupils' access to the broader curriculum is not impeded by limited literacy or numeracy skills.
- Samples of pupils' work show them to have well-developed knowledge across a range of subjects and year groups. Pupils demonstrate their secure understanding of the texts they are studying in English literature, expressing their thinking clearly. Similarly, in humanities, strong progress in pupils' knowledge and skills are evident in their interpretation of evidence sources. Occasionally, pupils do not work at a consistently high standard across their curriculum, reacting to variable expectations for what they can and should achieve.
- Pupils benefit academically from attending alternative provision. They sustain their studies towards useful qualifications in school while working to develop vital workplace skills. This enables them to be more successful academically than before they took up their placements.
- Pupils' high levels of achievement across a broad range of subjects prepare them successfully for their next stages in learning. Consequently, the proportion of pupils moving on to education, employment or training, post-16 and post-18, is very high. Leaders provide important extra help to vulnerable pupils who might otherwise become 'lost', guiding them carefully towards appropriate learning or work opportunities.
- For the past two years, disadvantaged pupils' progress by the end of Year 11 has been well below that of other pupils, both in school and nationally. Leaders' work to address this has had a positive impact, but improvements have been steady rather than dramatic. Consequently, despite leaders' determined efforts, disadvantaged pupils continue to underachieve compared with their peers. This remains a priority for leaders' ongoing work.
- Pupils with SEND are known and supported very well. As a result, they feel very safe, and their wider needs are met successfully. However, this does not translate consistently well into the strong progress required for them to catch up with their peers. Some pupils make very good progress, but others less so.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- Leaders know provision well. They have a clear understanding of the sixth form's strengths and relative weaknesses. Their vision for raising standards further is rightly driven by their desire for students to be happy, safe and successful.
- Helpful careers information guides students successfully into post-16 provision that meets their needs, either as part of the sixth form at Faringdon or by taking up apprenticeships or vocational courses at other local providers. Consequently, above-average proportions of students are retained on their post-16 courses, and similarly high numbers move on to education, employment or training at the end of Year 13.

- Leaders keep the curriculum under constant review. They have sensibly adapted their approach in response to the increasing demands of the new curriculum and disappointing student outcomes in 2017. Changes were too late to make enough of a difference to outcomes for students completing Year 13 in 2018 but are leading to higher standards for students currently in the school.
- Students benefit from a wider curriculum that prepares them well for life beyond school. Work experience is tailored closely to students' career aspirations. Students are expected and encouraged to play a visible part in the life of the school, such as through being sports leaders or midday supervisors. Citizenship day experiences respond directly to students' identified needs and relevant priorities. Consequently, they are both valuable and valued.
- The quality of teaching is consistently good. Teachers ensure that learning in lessons challenges pupils, including the most able, to think deeply and develop their understanding of complex topics. Students demonstrate resilience as they grapple with their work, supported effectively by each other and their teachers. As a result, students, including the small number following vocational courses, make good and increasingly strong progress over time. In contrast with the rest of the school, disadvantaged students achieve well.
- A very small number of students resit their English and mathematics GCSE qualifications while in the sixth form. Leaders ensure that students receive useful and specific teaching to help them secure better outcomes than they did by the end of Year 11. Students make strong progress in English. Their progress in mathematics is more gradual.
- Students are cared for extremely well. Leaders ensure that appropriate safeguarding arrangements are in place, mirroring the excellent practice evident in the rest of the school. Staff monitor attendance carefully, taking sensible and effective steps if students do not come to school as often as they should. The high levels of care that staff demonstrate enable students to flourish personally as well as academically.

School details

Unique reference number	137993
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	10088196

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Secondary
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	1234
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	163
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Mrs Liz Holmes
Headteacher	Mr Colin Proffitt
Telephone number	01367 240 375
Website	www.fcc.oxon.sch.uk
Email address	office@fcc.faringdon.academy
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Faringdon Community College is a school for pupils aged 11 to 18. It incorporates a sixth form which delivers an almost exclusively academic curriculum and consists mainly of pupils who attended the school during key stages 3 and 4. The school is growing in size, with eight tutor groups in Year 7 compared with seven tutor groups in Year 11.
- The school opened when the predecessor school converted to become an academy. It is the founder school in the Faringdon Academy of Schools multi-academy trust (MAT), which also incorporates seven local primary schools. All these schools are judged to be

good or outstanding by Ofsted.

- The MAT delegates responsibility for governance to a local governing body. Currently, the same person is chair of the trust and of the local governing body, as a temporary arrangement. Some members of the trust, including the chief executive officer, are very recently appointed to their posts.
- The school has not been inspected since it opened as an academy in April 2012. The predecessor school was judged to be outstanding at its most recent inspection in May 2008, making it exempt from routine inspection.
- The headteacher took up his post full-time in September 2016. Prior to that, he shared responsibility for headship with his predecessor, who was also the executive headteacher of the trust.
- Most pupils are of White British origin. Only a very small proportion are believed to speak English as an additional language. These include a group of pupils who attend the school for a year while their parents are studying at the nearby Defence Academy.
- The school is in an area of low social deprivation. A lower-than-average percentage of pupils are eligible for free school meals.
- A broadly average proportion of pupils are identified as having a special educational need.
- A very small number of pupils attend part-time alternative provision at Meadowbrook College or with a local employer.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection began as a no formal designation inspection under section 8 of the education act. Partway through the first day of inspection, it was deemed a section 5 inspection.
- Inspectors visited 61 lessons across all year groups and subject areas, some jointly with school leaders. They observed learning, talked to pupils and looked at their work. They also attended three assemblies and several tutor group sessions.
- The inspection team looked at a wide range of relevant documentary evidence. This included various policies, information on the school website, minutes from leaders' and governors' meetings, and leaders' records relating to pupils' attendance, behaviour and academic achievement. Alongside school leaders, inspectors reviewed a sample of work from pupils across all year groups.
- Inspectors also scrutinised the school's safeguarding arrangements, including records of checks on staff working at the school and of relevant training. They considered the school's work to keep pupils safe, including their work with external agencies.
- Inspectors held meetings with groups of leaders, pupils and governors. The lead inspector met with representatives of the trust and the local governing body.
- Parents' views were considered via 17 responses to Ofsted's Parent View online questionnaire, a letter received by the inspection team and 133 survey responses provided by school leaders. Inspectors also spoke informally to pupils and staff over the course of the inspection.

Inspection team

Kathryn Moles, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Peter Rodin	Ofsted Inspector
Lizzie Jeanes	Ofsted Inspector
Jane Cartwright	Ofsted Inspector
Patrick Harty	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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