

Inspection of Framwellgate School Durham

Newton Drive, Framwellgate Moor, Durham DH1 5BQ

Inspection dates: 14–15 July 2021

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Framwellgate School has improved since the last inspection. Leaders and governors have kept to their vision and sustained their efforts through a challenging period. They have systematically improved the culture in school. Pupils behave well. They are polite and courteous to one another and to the staff. Relationships between pupils and adults are friendly. Teachers meet and greet pupils at the start of lessons. Pupils appreciate the kindness shown to them.

The headteacher has raised expectations. Pupils wear their uniform with pride. They get to school on time. They all follow the COVID-19 (coronavirus) rules unquestioningly. Most pupils work hard and present their work with care. There are good opportunities for pupils interested in the arts, sport and vocational subjects. Pupils are increasingly choosing to study more academic subjects.

Pupils say that bullying happens occasionally, but that the staff deal with it. Leaders show strong moral leadership. They do not shy away from difficult issues. They have opened up debate about sexual harassment between pupils. They do not tolerate derogatory or racist language.

The school has been hit by the pandemic. This term, pupils in several year groups have had to self-isolate at home. The school has managed to provide remote learning effectively. Pupils and parents and carers are grateful for this.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The headteacher has sustained efforts to improve the school. He has skilfully navigated a course through the pandemic, without losing sight of what needed to improve. As a result, the school now provides a good quality of education. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the changes made. They praise the improvements in behaviour and the academic rigour that is now firmly in place. The culture of higher aspiration that was noticeable when Ofsted last visited has now firmly taken root.

The curriculum model introduced three years ago brought better examination results in 2019. Better teaching has also encouraged more pupils to choose academic courses. Next year, over three quarters of pupils in Year 9 will follow the suite of subjects in the English Baccalaureate. This shows the school's increased ambition. However, pupils opt for examination courses in Year 8. This means that pupils drop some subjects before they are taught all of the prescribed knowledge in the national curriculum for key stage 3. This means that pupils miss out on some important areas of knowledge, such as geography fieldwork.

Within subjects, the teaching of knowledge is carefully sequenced. Teachers have identified the knowledge to be taught and use assessment effectively to check what pupils know and remember. The improved quality of curriculum planning is

supporting better and more consistent teaching. In a few subjects, curriculum planning is less thorough, and this results in less precise teaching. Pupils who have weaker reading skills get suitable extra help. Nevertheless, leaders have ambitious plans to strengthen the teaching of reading next year.

Teachers receive a rich diet of training and professional development. This has helped to retain new teachers to the profession. The training received has improved teachers' practice. Typically, teachers revisit previous knowledge at the start of lessons. This is helping pupils to recall more of what they are taught.

Support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) has improved. Pupils' support plans provide teachers with strategies to help pupils access the curriculum fully. Teachers make use of these plans. Some younger pupils learn in a nurture class that meets their needs well. Teachers give extra time in lessons to pupils with SEND and to disadvantaged pupils. Most pupils with SEND make good progress.

The curriculum caters effectively for pupils' personal development. Content about staying safe, anti-bullying, relationships and equalities is woven across the curriculum. Pupils are taught about the importance of democracy, respect and tolerance. Pupils speak knowledgeably about the negative impact of derogatory and racist language. The school has an active lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGBT) group. In recent weeks, leaders have led sessions to raise awareness and challenge sexual harassment between pupils in school. This has encouraged healthy reflection and discussion. Impartial careers guidance systems are well developed and help pupils to take their next steps into further education, employment or training.

The sixth form is well led and managed. The numbers of students progressing into the sixth form are growing. The school offers a broad range of academic and some vocational courses for post-16 students. Similar improvements have been made to curriculum planning and teaching as are seen lower down the school. The most recently available examination results from 2019 showed that students achieved highly.

The headteacher and other leaders are considerate of staff workload. The headteacher meets every teacher each year to gather their views. Staff see leaders as approachable and ready to listen. Leaders have made changes to the school's marking policy to reduce the burden on teachers.

Leaders show integrity and want the best outcomes for pupils. The school only enters pupils for meaningful qualifications. They do not off-roll pupils. Every effort is made to help pupils who have problems with health or attendance.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

This is a caring school. Leaders acted quickly to identify and support more vulnerable families when the pandemic struck. They ensured that regular checks were made on pupils when schools were not open to everyone. Leaders have appointed more pastoral staff and a family liaison manager so that they can respond more effectively. Leaders have fostered a strong safeguarding culture. They ensure that vetting checks on adults who work in or visit the school are thorough. Appropriate actions are taken to protect pupils at risk of harm. Leaders challenge external partners if they are not satisfied that enough is being done.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Pupils currently opt for their examination courses towards the end of Year 8. In practice, this means that pupils stop learning some subjects early and are not taught all the content set out in the national curriculum. The school should review its curriculum model and ensure that pupils receive a broader range of knowledge before embarking on examination courses.
- Since the last inspection, curriculum leaders have reviewed and rewritten their curriculum plans. In most subjects, curriculum planning is rigorous and detailed. This is helping teachers to improve what is taught. In a few subjects, curriculum planning is not as detailed. This results in some teaching that is less well sequenced or precise. Leaders should check the range and quality of curriculum planning across subjects and support curriculum leaders to refine planning, where necessary.
- Around one in five pupils in Year 7 entered the school with a reading age below their chronological age. Leaders recognise that weaker reading skills are a major barrier to pupils' progress through the curriculum. Leaders now need to implement their planned strategy to develop reading skills and foster a love of reading across the school.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for published performance information about the school [here](#).

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.

School details

Unique reference number	137696
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10194812
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,280
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	140
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Amanda Hopgood
Headteacher	Andy Byers
Website	www.framdurham.com
Date of previous inspection	4 July 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the last section 5 inspection in May 2018, the headteacher has recruited several new members to the senior leadership team. There have been many changes at middle leadership level and to the teaching staff.
- The school currently uses five different alternative providers for six pupils. Pupils are placed with alternative providers only with the agreement of the local behaviour panel. All providers used are on a local authority approved list. Three of the providers are registered providers. Two are not.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school, and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- Inspectors met the headteacher and other senior leaders, the special educational needs coordinator, a range of other staff, and groups of pupils, including students in the sixth form. Inspectors also met the chair of the local governing board and a number of trustees, including the chair of the trust board.
- An inspector talked to a representative of the local authority by telephone.
- Inspectors did deep dives in English, mathematics, physical education, art and design, and geography. Inspectors looked at these subjects across each key stage, including the sixth form. Inspectors met the curriculum leaders for each subject, scrutinised planning, visited lessons, talked to pupils, looked at pupils' workbooks and talked to teachers.
- Inspectors looked at information about behaviour, attendance, extra-curricular activities and wider enrichment events.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' punctuality, behaviour and conduct across the school day. The team held discussions with pupils who had received sanctions in the past. An inspector also spoke to different members of staff, including early career teachers, to gauge their views about how well pupils behave and conduct themselves.
- An inspector spoke to representatives of alternative education providers used by the school.
- Inspectors looked at the vetting checks that leaders make on adults who work in the school. An inspector also talked to the leader in charge of safeguarding arrangements. The inspector looked at records of the actions taken by leaders to protect pupils at risk. The team spoke to pupils to check how safe they felt. Inspectors also checked whether members of staff understand and abide by the school's safeguarding policy.
- Inspectors took account of the 108 responses to the staff survey, the 219 responses to the pupil survey and the 403 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View.

Inspection team

Chris Smith, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
John Downs	Ofsted Inspector
Barry Found	Ofsted Inspector
Graham Findlay	Her Majesty's Inspector
Carl Sugden	Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children’s social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children’s services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2021