

Inspection of a good school: Friesland School

Nursery Avenue, Sandiacre, Nottinghamshire NG10 5AF

Inspection dates:

21 and 22 September 2022

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders have begun building an ambitious, well-structured curriculum that aims to prepare pupils for the world of work. However, these curriculum improvements are recent. At this point, only the school's youngest pupils are benefiting fully from the changes.

The headteacher recognised that pupils' behaviour needed to improve. He set high expectations for pupils' conduct. Pupils' behaviour has now improved. Some pupils and parents and carers, however, find the changes in the behaviour policy difficult to adjust to. They see the behaviour code as too strict.

Most pupils feel safe and happy at school. Leaders have a strong pastoral system to support pupils and deal with bullying. The school won a regional anti-bullying award, which recognises this work. Leaders deal effectively with the occasional bullying incidents.

Pupils have a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities to choose from. Most pupils take part in these activities. Many older pupils, for example, take part in The Duke of Edinburgh's Award. Staff make sure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) get the help they need to take part in enrichment activities.

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

Many new leaders have recently joined the school. They are engaging the staff in their work to improve the quality of pupils' education. Leaders, however, are mindful of teachers' workloads.

School leaders are ambitious for all pupils. Leaders have considerable expertise in identifying and supporting the needs of pupils with SEND. They are raising teachers' expectations of what pupils with SEND can achieve.

Teachers have good subject knowledge. Leaders have recently introduced the 'Friesland lesson'. This is a set of expectations for teaching. It includes an approach to checking what pupils have learned. At this early stage, this approach has not led to pupils remembering as much of the curriculum as leaders would like them to. Some pupils still have significant gaps in their subject knowledge. Leaders have recently begun to set out precisely the knowledge pupils need to learn. This starts in Year 7. These pupils follow a well-structured curriculum.

Pupils in Years 7 and 8 study all the national curriculum subjects. Older pupils have many option choices. Despite these strengths, there are some weaknesses in the curriculum. Not all pupils study the full range of national curriculum subjects after Year 8. Some pupils stop studying some subjects in Year 8 and others in Year 9. Pupils who do not take a qualification in religious education do not study the subject formally in all year groups. Some subjects are not studied in enough depth. There are, for example, limited opportunities for pupils to study local history at key stage 3.

Following the COVID-19 pandemic, some pupils have been reluctant to re-engage with their education. Leaders are working with these pupils to help them understand the importance of coming to school. However, some pupils' attendance is too low.

Staff consistently follow the school's behaviour policy. There is little disruptive behaviour in lessons. When it happens, teachers deal with it swiftly. Pupils behave well around the school site. Some pupils are positive about the behaviour of their peers. Leaders are working with a small group of pupils to ensure pupils' conduct improves.

Some of the parents who gave responses to Ofsted's online survey for parents do not feel that leaders communicate with them well enough, including about the school's behaviour policy.

Teachers provide opportunities to enhance pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. In English, for example, pupils discuss how society's attitudes to women have changed over time.

The school offers wide-ranging opportunities in the performing arts. Pupils and sixth-form students take part in two full theatre productions annually.

Leaders prioritise reading. They dedicate two and a half hours each week to reading activities. Pupils in the early stages of learning to read take part in activities to improve their reading skills. However, they do not follow a systematic phonics programme. This means that early readers do not learn important phonics knowledge that could help improve their reading.

Pupils and sixth-form students follow a carefully planned careers programme. This includes work experience in Years 10 and 12.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff complete regular safeguarding training. They know the signs that could indicate pupils may need extra help to keep them safe. Staff make effective use of a new system to record their concerns. Leaders act quickly when they are concerned about pupils, so pupils get the help they need. School leaders have good working relationships with safeguarding agencies.

Leaders manage safeguarding issues effectively. The Two Counties Trust provides effective support to help leaders manage their safeguarding duties well.

Pupils learn about the potential risks they face and how to manage them. These risks include local dangers, such as county lines gangs and nearby canals.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some pupils have gaps in their subject knowledge. This means they do not always have the strong foundation they need for their future learning. Leaders have recently begun pinpointing and teaching the key pieces of knowledge they want pupils to learn at each stage. Leaders should continue to identify the important knowledge in each subject, ensuring that pupils are taught this content and remember it so that they can reach challenging curriculum goals.
- The school's compulsory curriculum lacks the breadth of the national curriculum beyond Year 8. Leaders should ensure that all pupils benefit from a curriculum that matches or exceeds the breadth of the national curriculum at each stage.
- Too many pupils at the school are persistently absent, including many of the school's disadvantaged pupils. This hampers their learning. Leaders should build on the work they have begun to ensure that pupils value their education and that their attendance improves.
- Though leaders have a range of ways of communicating with parents and pupils, including a weekly news bulletin, a minority of parents do not feel the school communicates effectively. This makes it difficult for pupils and parents to fully share leaders' ambitions for the school. Some pupils and parents, for example, do not understand the need for the changes leaders have made to the behaviour policy. Leaders should further engage with parents and pupils in their work.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Friesland School, to be good in May 2015.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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.

Further information

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

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	145966
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	10240407
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1290
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	178
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Karen Potts
Headteacher	Craig Patterson
Website	www.friesland.ttct.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school uses five unregistered alternative providers.
- Friesland School converted to become an academy in June 2018. When its predecessor school, also known as Friesland School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- The school appointed the current headteacher two years ago. Many of his senior colleagues have been appointed within the last year.

Information about this inspection

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

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and other school leaders. The lead inspector met with three representatives of the local governing body and the chair of the multi-academy trust. She also held a discussion with the trust’s chief executive officer.
- The lead inspector examined the school’s arrangements for safeguarding by meeting with the designated lead for safeguarding and a trust officer. She also scrutinised policies, procedures and record-keeping. The inspector reviewed the checks leaders had made on staff when they were recruited. All inspectors spoke to staff about the school’s safeguarding arrangements.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, history and drama. During each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, discussed the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, looked at a range of pupils’ work and held discussions with teachers and pupils. An inspector also looked at a selection of curriculum plans in other subjects.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documents, including policies and behaviour management records.
- Inspectors spoke informally to pupils around the school site and held meetings with pupils. They also considered pupils’ responses to Ofsted’s online questionnaire for pupils.
- Inspectors spoke to staff to understand their views of the school. They also considered staff’s responses to Ofsted’s online questionnaire for staff.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, the online inspection questionnaire, including parents’ free-text comments.

Inspection team

Ellenor Beighton, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Laura Rowe	Ofsted Inspector
Jane Burton	Ofsted Inspector

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