

Inspection of a good school: Frome Community College

Bath Road, Frome, Somerset BA11 2HQ

Inspection dates:

4 and 5 October 2023

Outcome

Frome Community College continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy being part of Frome Community College. Pupils are safe and have trusted adults to speak to if they have concerns. Pupils have many opportunities to nurture their talents and interests. For example, pupils and students in the sixth form take part in regular drama productions and musical showcases. Pupils are enthusiastic to be members of the student council, working with staff to make the school better.

Most pupils behave well. Low-level disruption is not tolerated, which means learning is rarely interrupted. When the school sets high expectations for pupils, they rise to meet those standards. This is particularly evident in the sixth form. However, expectations of pupils are not consistently high. For example, lateness to lessons is not always challenged, so a few pupils do not show an urgency to begin lessons.

Bullying does happen on occasion, and pupils do report concerns to adults. The school is now proactively working to reduce incidents of bullying. For example, the school is training anti-bullying pupil ambassadors to act as role models to others. Pupils are proud to hold these leadership roles.

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

Pupils can study a wide range of subjects at key stage 4, including those within the English Baccalaureate. The school's focus on knowledge retrieval means that pupils remember content well over time. Assessment identifies gaps in pupils' knowledge and corrects misconceptions. However, pupils are not always shown examples of what high-quality work looks like. This leads to some pupils underestimating expectations for their own work.

The school has considered pupils' prior knowledge when planning the curriculum. Staff introduce new ideas step by step. Pupils build their knowledge well, particularly in key stage 4. Even so, when pupils join the school in Year 9, some aspects of the curriculum

they experience are not as ambitious. Consequently, a few pupils are not as well prepared for the high expectations of key stage 4 study as they might be.

The school accurately identifies the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Learning passports outline what support pupils should receive. The curriculum is appropriately adapted for pupils in most cases. Students are particularly well supported in the sixth form.

The school values reading highly. Pupils experience a range of texts, both in English and across other subjects. Pupils read, and are read to, regularly. Pupils can find new texts to enjoy through themed reading lists. The school library holds regular events to promote pupils' engagement with reading. Activities include guest writers, murder mystery puzzles and visits to other local libraries. Pupils can recommend books to each other through 'blind date with a book'. Sixth-form students act as reading buddies to help younger pupils develop their confidence in reading. The school supports the weakest readers well to improve their reading accuracy and confidence. This allows pupils of all abilities to appreciate the value of reading.

The curriculum offered by Frome Community College extends well beyond the academic for all year groups. For example, Year 9 pupils take part in a camp and country walk as part of their induction into college life. Many students go on to complete the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme because of this experience.

The personal development curriculum provides pupils with the knowledge they need to keep themselves healthy. Pupils learn about relationships and consent in an age-appropriate way. All pupils learn about the world of work, apprenticeships, and higher education. Careers information is impartial and focused on supporting pupils to make the right choice for their future. Pupils learn practical skills for future life, such as personal finance and interview skills. Pupils and students in the sixth form are well prepared for adult life.

Many parents are positive about the education that their young people receive at Frome Community College. However, some parents would like to hear more from the school about how their child is being supported and challenged to achieve their best academically.

Staff are proud to work at the school. Most feel that the school is considerate of their workload and well-being. Staff feel able to seek support when required. Those newest to teaching are well supported.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some aspects of the Year 9 curriculum are not ambitious for all pupils. This means that a few pupils do not build on their prior learning as well as they might. The school should ensure that all areas of the Year 9 curriculum identify the key knowledge pupils will need to achieve well at key stage 4.
- The school's high expectations for pupils' behaviour and attitudes towards learning are not always consistently applied. Consequently, some pupils do not show the same commitment to their learning in all areas of the curriculum and wider school life. The school should ensure that there is a shared understanding of expectations.

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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in January 2014.

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](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	123862
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	10297942
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	13 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,297
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	325
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Gayle Willmott
Principal	Emma Reynolds
Website	www.fromecollege.org
Date of previous inspection	24 April 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This school uses two registered alternative providers and four unregistered alternative providers.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school 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 of the school.
- Inspectors held discussions with school leaders at all levels. Inspectors also met staff and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: mathematics, science, art and history. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, looked at curriculum planning, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at a sample of work.
- Inspectors spoke with representatives of the pupil body, including students in the sixth form.
- Inspectors viewed a range of school documentation, including minutes of governing body meetings, the school's self-evaluation, and development plans.
- Inspectors reviewed plans in support of pupils with SEND.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record of recruitment checks; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors considered responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, as well as responses to the staff survey and pupil survey.

Inspection team

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