

Inspection of Faringdon Community College

Fernham Road, Faringdon, Oxfordshire SN7 7LB

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 May 2024

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	Good

The headteacher of this school is Phil Bevan. This school is part of Faringdon Learning Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Richard Evans, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Anthony Cook.

What is it like to attend this school?

Faringdon School is a rapidly growing school. Pupils in all year groups, including the sixth form, enjoy their lessons and are well supported by staff. Opportunities are provided to broaden pupils' interests and experiences. Pupils are excited for their future and willingly participate in extra-curricular activities. They are proud to take part in volunteering and help around the school as 'environmental protection officers'. Additionally, older pupils act as buddies to younger ones in school or as sports leaders who regularly help at local primary school events.

The school has high expectations for pupils' behaviour and is working to make sure that all pupils can meet them. While most pupils consistently behave well, a small number have found this more difficult. These pupils welcome the individual support they now receive. This is helping them to steadily improve their behaviour and their ambition at school.

Pupils appreciate the lessons they have about positive relationships and staying safe. This means that pupils have a well-developed sense of fairness and of being part of a community. They know who to talk to if they have concerns and pastoral support is increasingly personalised. Bullying is not tolerated. Leaders act quickly should it occur.

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

The school's ambitious curriculum prepares pupils well for the next stage of their education, training or employment. Pupils study a wide range of subjects and appreciate the choice they have of both GCSEs and A levels. In most subjects, staff use their strong subject expertise to teach knowledge at the right time and then check pupils' learning. However, in the subjects where this is less precise, teachers are not always clear about the order in which specific knowledge should be learned, making it difficult to consistently check pupils' understanding. This means pupils do not always achieve as highly as they could. The school recognises this, and continues to provide additional training and support as needed.

The school makes sure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive support in lessons. However, because some staff are not familiar enough with pupils' individual needs, this support is not precisely targeted. The school is working to ensure staff are clear about the needs of pupils with SEND, and to ensure that the support provided is of high quality.

The importance of reading is prioritised. At the start of each lesson, quiet reading time helps pupils to quickly settle and boosts their reading practice. Frequent checking of pupils' reading ability means that the school is able to provide help should any pupil need more support.

The school's sixth form is vibrant, and students enjoy their studies. In lessons they benefit from very good relationships with their teachers and each other. This leads

to a learning atmosphere where knowledge is deepened through discussion, tailored tasks, and activities. Students play an important role in the school and are particularly proud of the whole-school performances, where they play leading roles and support younger pupils in their acting debuts.

Most pupils behave well and are polite and welcoming. They have positive relationships with their teachers and the vast majority are respectful to one another. However, sometimes pupils' learning is disrupted, and at times a small minority of pupils do not meet the school's expectations of behaviour. In the past, the school's behaviour systems have not always been used by staff as consistently as leaders intended. In response to this, the school has deliberately strengthened both the support pupils receive and the clarity of how pupils are expected to behave. This has been effective in reducing the number of incidents, but further work is needed so all pupils are helped to meet the expectations of behaviour.

The attendance of some pupils is too low. The school recognises how this has led to some pupils having gaps in their subject knowledge and understanding. The school has put new systems in place to help pupils attend regularly. Leaders know the importance of continuing to focus on these to ensure pupils do not miss out on valuable learning.

Pupils value the personal development opportunities offered, including the effective careers programme. Sixth-form students have a broad understanding of the range of choices they have after A levels. Termly 'PD Days' teach pupils about how to stay safe and healthy. A range of clubs and activities help to develop pupils' broader interests, and the school is ambitious to do more. International trips, such as skiing, to the CERN Laboratories in Switzerland and to Uganda, enhance pupils' understanding of the world.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of subjects, curriculum thinking is still being refined. As a result, in places, pupils do not learn as much as they could. The school should ensure that, for all subjects, staff have a secure understanding of the sequence of knowledge pupils need to learn over time and check this is building towards the ambitious end points.
- Currently, the support that some pupils with SEND receive is not as precise as it should be. This means that pupils are not always getting the support they need. The school should continue to ensure all staff have the knowledge they need to provide the required precise support for pupils with SEND to achieve well.

- The school is continuing to refine policies and practice related to behaviour. As a result, there are some inconsistencies in how well some staff implement the identified strategies. The school must continue to support staff in understanding the shared expectations and approaches.

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	137993
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	10321950
Type of school	Secondary
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	1,422
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	170
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Anthony Cook
CEO of trust	Richard Evans
Headteacher	Phil Bevan
Website	https://www.fccoxon.co.uk/
Date of previous inspection	26 and 27 February 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Faringdon Learning Trust.
- The school currently uses one registered and eight unregistered alternative providers.
- This school is a larger-than-average secondary school, which has grown rapidly since 2019.
- Many of the school's leadership started in post since the last inspection.
- The school meets the requirements of 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

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection of the school since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, special educational needs and disabilities coordinator, curriculum leaders, and other staff.
- The inspectors met with governors, including the chair of the local governing body. They also met with the chair of trustees and the chief executive officer.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: science, English, design and technology, religious education, history, and modern foreign languages. For each deep dive, the inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning, and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- The inspectors examined a range of documentation provided by the school, including leaders' self-evaluation and improvement plans.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors reviewed the single central record; 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 puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View. They also took into consideration the responses to the confidential staff and pupil surveys.

Ed Mather, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Jason Philipsz

Ofsted Inspector

Nick Simmonds

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