

Inspection of Framwellgate School Durham

Newton Drive, Framwellgate Moor, Durham DH1 5BQ

Inspection dates:	5 and 6 November 2024
The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Requires improvement
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Good

The headteacher of this school is Michael Wright. This school is part of The Excel Academy Partnership Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the interim accounting officer, Wendy Pattison, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Stephen Hall.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are taught to be compassionate and respectful at Framwellgate School. This work is helping pupils to foster positive relationships with their teachers and their peers. Most pupils are happy at school. The school's work to safeguard pupils is thorough and effective. There is strong pastoral care. Pupils know who they can talk to if they have concerns.

Pupils behave well. They are polite and courteous. The school has developed its behaviour policy to focus on rewards. Pupils are motivated by this. Bullying sometimes happens. Most pupils are confident that their concerns will be dealt with effectively by staff.

The school is ambitious for pupils to succeed. There are high expectations for pupils' achievement. However, pupils learn better in some subjects than in others. This is because there are inconsistencies in the way the curriculum is delivered.

The sixth form is a strength of the school. Sixth-form students are positive role models for younger pupils. They make a positive contribution to the school by supporting younger pupils in their lessons and as 'peer mentors'.

The school is committed to supporting pupils with their personal development. For example, pupils develop their leadership skills through roles such as 'anti-bullying ambassadors' and they are taught ways to look after their physical and mental health.

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

The school offers pupils an ambitious curriculum. A high proportion of pupils study the English baccalaureate (Ebacc) suite of subjects at key stage 4. The school offers students in the sixth form a range of academic and vocational subjects that prepare them well for their next steps.

The school has identified the important knowledge that pupils should learn. However, pupils do not learn and remember this knowledge consistently well. Teachers do not systematically check pupils' understanding. This means that misconceptions are not identified routinely and, as a result, pupils have gaps in their knowledge. Leaders have taken recent action to improve the way the curriculum is designed and implemented in some subjects. This work is in its infancy and the impact on pupils' achievement in these subjects is not realised. However, in the sixth form, students learn to be independent in their studies. They engage and achieve well. This is because the curriculum is delivered with greater success and is well established.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) access the same curriculum as their peers. There are clear processes for identifying and reviewing pupils' needs. However, the school has not ensured that all staff have a secure understanding of how to support pupils with specific needs. The school does not monitor carefully enough the quality of teaching for pupils with SEND. The support that pupils with SEND receive in

lessons is variable. As a result, pupils with SEND do not learn and achieve as well as they might.

The school promotes reading for pleasure. Pupils take part in a range of reading challenges, competitions and author visits. Pupils who are weaker readers, or who are at the early stages of reading, do not get the support they need. Very few staff have the knowledge and skills required to help the number of pupils who need support, including those who need phonics teaching. These pupils do not access the curriculum as well as they could.

The school is a calm and purposeful place for pupils to learn in and most pupils attend well. The school monitors behaviour incidents effectively. This has resulted in a decrease of incidents of poor behaviour because pupils are increasingly getting the help that they need.

The personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum is well designed from Year 7 to Year 13. Pupils have secure knowledge about how to stay safe online and healthy relationships. The school offers pupils a range of ways to develop their wider skills and talents. Pupils take part in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award and extra-curricular activities such as robotics, creative writing and a range of sports.

Pupils are very tolerant. They are proud of the fact that everyone in their school is equal. They learn about protected characteristics and they celebrate events such as 'International Women's Day', 'Black History Month' and 'Pride Month'. The school has 'School of Sanctuary' status. This reflects the welcoming nature of the school, particularly for those seeking safety and support.

The school offers a thorough careers programme. Pupils learn about a range of careers and training pathways. The school supports students well so that, by the end of key stage 5, they secure their places at university, in further education or employment.

Staff feel supported by school leaders. Staff appreciate that support for their well-being is a high priority for leaders, including the recently appointed headteacher. Leaders are well supported by the highly skilled governors and trustees. They understand their statutory roles and fulfil them well.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum is not implemented consistently well in all subjects, including the ways that pupils' misconceptions are identified and addressed. This means that pupils' experiences of the curriculum, and their achievement by the end of key stage 4, are

variable because of gaps in their knowledge. The school should ensure that the curriculum is implemented well in all subjects, including with the use of assessment, so that pupils know more and achieve more.

- The school does not adapt the curriculum for pupils with SEND consistently well. Some staff have not been sufficiently trained to identify and meet pupils' needs. As a result, some pupils with SEND do not learn as well as they should. The school should ensure that it quality assures the provision for pupils with SEND robustly, evaluates the impact of the support and identifies where curriculum adaptations and further professional development are needed.
- The weakest readers, including those at the earliest stages of reading, do not get the support that they need. This means that these pupils do not read as well as they should and this limits how successfully they learn across subjects. The school must ensure that staff get the skills and knowledge they need to support the weakest readers and that a comprehensive, effective and timely programme of support for reading is implemented for those pupils who need it.

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	137696
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10346429
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	1279
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	135
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Stephen Hall
Accounting officer	Wendy Pattison (Interim)
Headteacher	Michael Wright
Website	www.framdurham.com
Dates of previous inspection	14 and 15 July 2021

Information about this school

- The headteacher has been in post since September 2024.
- The school uses six registered and six unregistered alternative provisions for some pupils.
- 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

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements

(quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- During the inspection, inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior leaders responsible for the quality of education, behaviour and attendance, pupils' personal development including careers, SEND and the sixth form.
- The lead inspector met with the acting CEO, the chair of the board of trustees, other trustees and members of the local governing body. Inspectors reviewed documentation relating to governance, including minutes from governor meetings.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, modern foreign languages, geography and design and technology. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also visited a sample of lessons and looked at a sample of pupils' work in some other subjects. An inspector met with subject leaders in art and design and music.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils formally during the inspection and spoke with them informally at social times and in lessons. Inspectors also considered the opinions expressed through the pupil survey.
- Inspectors met with groups of staff formally during the inspection and spoke with them informally throughout the inspection. Inspectors also considered the opinions expressed through the staff survey.
- The lead inspector took account of responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey and the free-text responses.

Inspection team

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His Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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