

Frankley Community High School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103529
Local Authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	323853
Inspection dates	24–25 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Dilip Kadodwala HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	436
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Walt Suett
Headteacher	Jonathan Wilding
Date of previous school inspection	27 June 2006
School address	New Street Frankley Birmingham B45 0EU
Telephone number	01214 649901
Fax number	01214 648706

Age group	11–16
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's inspectors and two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a small school, serving an area in which deprivation rates are high. The proportion of pupils who are eligible for free schools meals is very high. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. About 3% are from Black British Caribbean or African heritages and around 6% are from mixed backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who are at an early stage of acquiring the English language is lower than found nationally. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those who have a statement of special educational needs, is high. A high number of pupils join the school after Year 7, and about the same proportion move on before completing Year 11. The school has achieved a number of awards including Investors in People, Artsmark Gold, Sportsmark and the International Schools Award.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Frankley provides its pupils with a satisfactory and improving education. It is an inclusive school which is valued by the community it serves. Pupils have a strong sense of belonging to the school and make an excellent contribution to the wider community, for example through their involvement in a project with the local council and the youth service to develop youth activities for the local area. Pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory with some good elements. Relationships between different groups of pupils are good and there is racial harmony. Overall, pupils' behaviour is satisfactory. The school provides good care, guidance and support to its pupils. Those who are the most vulnerable are monitored closely and this enables them to achieve well. Suitable strategies are being used to tackle persistent absenteeism but the overall attendance rate is below average, in part reflecting the high incidence of pupil mobility. A good, broad and balanced curriculum is suitable for the needs of all pupils, and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities benefit from further tailored support to ensure that they make good progress. Frankley's involvement in the engineering diploma and the provision of vocational courses, one of which all pupils study, raises pupils' motivation and also reflects the school's good links with its partners.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Learning is most successful when lessons proceed at a brisk pace and teachers use challenging questions and tasks to extend pupils' understanding. Although there are some good and outstanding lessons, there are not enough to ensure that pupils are challenged to attain higher standards, particularly in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Teachers have access to a range of data on pupils' performance but this is not always used in lessons to drive improvement. Too often pupils are passive learners who have insufficient opportunities to be actively involved in independent learning. Inconsistencies in teachers' marking mean that pupils are not always given enough guidance on how to improve their work.

Achievement is satisfactory. Pupils start at the school with low standards, particularly in literacy and numeracy. All pupils leave with at least one GCSE pass; standards in computer studies are above average and in vocational subjects broadly average. However, the proportion of pupils gaining five or more good GCSE passes is below average, and over recent years the proportion of pupils attaining five or more A* to C grades including the key subjects of English and mathematics has been very low. The school's current tracking data shows that the percentage of pupils expected to attain this important benchmark measure this year will be close to 23%. Whilst still low in national terms, this represents significant improvement.

The leadership provided by the headteacher is good and he is ably supported by a committed senior leadership team. Although there are established systems for monitoring the school's work, there has been insufficient rigour in the quality of evaluation and follow-up action, for example in ensuring that all middle managers are held responsible for the standards attained in their areas of responsibility. Improving standards in GCSE English and mathematics are now evident because of closer monitoring of individual pupils' progress and attendance, and interventions for targeted pupils such as mentoring by senior leaders and other staff. There are also emerging strengths in the system for monitoring the quality of teaching, with a sharper focus on how well pupils are learning in lessons. Capacity for improvement is good because leadership is effective in ensuring that barriers to learning are removed in a school which faces many challenges, including high levels of social deprivation and pupil mobility. Good governance

and effective partnerships with other schools are ensuring that improvements can be sustained. Progress on improving the issues identified in the last inspection has been good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the proportion of pupils gaining five or more A* to C grades, particularly in English, mathematics and science.
- Raise the proportion of good or better teaching by engaging pupils more in their own learning and ensuring that marking consistently informs pupils how to improve their work.
- Ensure that the systems for monitoring and evaluation, including of attendance, are implemented rigorously and consistently across the school.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' progress is satisfactory overall. It is satisfactory in mathematics and science and good or better in most other subjects, and although progress in the important subject of English has been slower, secure school evidence indicates that progress here is also now satisfactory. Results over recent years at the end of Year 11 have been variable, but low overall. Standards are below average in terms of five good passes at GCSE and average when at least one GCSE pass is considered. In computer studies, standards are above average. In 2008, the proportion of students attaining five or more GCSE A* to C grades including English and mathematics was exceptionally low at 11%. Targeted intervention for the current Year 11 pupils is showing signs of success in dealing with this weakness. Challenging targets have been set and senior leaders are confident that they will be met. There are no significant differences in the achievement of most different groups of pupils, including those from minority ethnic backgrounds or abilities. However, pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those who have a statement of special educational needs, make good progress because of the quality of support they receive.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

The curriculum, planned activities and community links contribute well to pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils say they feel safe at school, know who to turn to if they feel bullied or threatened, and report that incidents are dealt with quickly and effectively. Pupils learn about the need to make informed personal choices in relation to healthy lifestyles and engage in physical exercise through a variety of timetabled activities and lunch and after-school clubs. Pupils usually choose sensibly from the meals organised by the school but food brought into school is less healthy. Pupils are generally polite, helpful and courteous. Behaviour and enjoyment of learning are satisfactory. Fixed-term exclusions have been used to reinforce high expectations of behaviour, particularly around the school and in corridors, and as these expectations are becoming more widely accepted, exclusions are decreasing significantly. Overall attendance figures are below average, in part reflecting the high pupil mobility and the disproportionate impact of a small group of persistent absentees in Year 11. The strategies employed to tackle this stubborn problem, including one-to-one mentoring and a well-understood, visible reward system, are proving increasingly successful. Pupils' excellent

contribution to the community is demonstrated through their peer mentoring, a vibrant school council and links to the wider community, including participation in a good range of enterprise activities which help to develop their financial capability and leadership skills. Pupils' satisfactory basic skills in literacy and numeracy prepare them soundly for adult life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Positive relationships exist between teachers and pupils, and where classroom management is good, pupils work hard and with success. In the better lessons teachers use a variety of teaching methods to engage and motivate pupils. They are actively involved in tasks and assignments which are engaging and, because these lessons require pupils to use their independent learning skills, pupils enjoy learning. Recent modifications to planning mean that lessons typically identify the needs of individual pupils and a range of tasks to meet these needs. Lesson objectives are shared with pupils and checks are made to ensure that they have understood them. Pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well catered for, with committed and resourceful learning support assistants. As a result, these pupils make good progress. However, in a significant number of lessons the pupils are passive and insufficiently involved in their own learning. Not enough use is made of questioning techniques to probe the depth of pupils' understanding. The use of pupils' performance data to inform lesson planning and teaching is underdeveloped, and this is a key factor in the standards attained by pupils. There is some inconsistency in the quality and frequency of homework set as well as in the quality of teachers' assessment. Although pupils are aware of their levels and target grades, the marking of their work is not always clear on how they can improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Flexible provision meets the needs of all groups of pupils well both in academic courses and vocational subjects. The school has responded positively to the new secondary curriculum by devising an approach to learning which makes good links between different subjects and skills. This is being run alongside the existing 'Learning for Life' course, using the development of pupils' personal thinking and learning skills as a key feature. A creative programme of Year 7 'skills days' and other enterprise activities contribute to pupils' enjoyment of learning. At Key Stage 4, a full range of GCSE courses is offered and every pupil is expected to take at least one vocational subject. This means that in courses such as BTEC business studies, sport, information and communication technology and art, pupils' achievement is good. There are many opportunities for sports and extra-curricular activities and these are much valued by the good number of pupils who take part.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care and support for pupils are at the heart of the school's work and this greatly benefits pupils, especially those who are the most vulnerable. There are well-established arrangements for providing pastoral care and pupils speak highly of the help provided by staff. There is effective monitoring of the welfare and academic progress of children who are looked after. Procedures for safeguarding pupils' welfare, including child protection, meet government requirements.

There are well-established links with other schools in the area and pupils are given good advice about choices and opportunities available in Years 9 and 11. Academic guidance is adequate overall but marking of pupils' work is inconsistent and lacks clear pointers for pupils on how they can improve the standards of their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

There is a common drive to raise standards at all levels. The governing body shares this vision, governors are supportive and knowledgeable, and challenge senior leaders suitably. Together they have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for further improvement and have in place the right strategies to tackle weaknesses, reflecting effective self-evaluation. Senior leaders ensure that development planning is based on a consideration of a wide range of views, including those expressed by parents and pupils. The school makes every effort to ensure that discrimination is eliminated and the needs of all pupils are met. Leadership is effective in promoting community cohesion. The needs of the local community are known well and met through the school's designation as a community school, and good links with international schools help to increase pupils' understanding about global communities. The use of a more robust tracking system is being implemented well in Years 10 and 11, where the evaluation of pupils' progress is linked to an increasingly sharp evaluation of the quality of teaching, and a greater focus on how well pupils are learning ensures earlier interventions when pupils are found to be falling behind. However, this system has yet to be implemented across the whole school and some inconsistencies remain in the quality of teaching and learning, particularly in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

26 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Frankley Community High School, Birmingham B45 OEU

Thank you for helping us with the inspection of your school. We were extremely impressed with your warm welcome. We enjoyed talking with you and the things you shared with us helped us to carry out our job easily.

We judged that your school is satisfactory. Your achievement is satisfactory as a result of satisfactory teaching and learning. You do well in some subjects such as computer studies, physical education and art, but standards are low in terms of the numbers gaining five or more good GCSE passes including English, mathematics and science. Senior leaders told us that there are some good or better lessons and we saw that you are sometimes challenged to think for yourselves. However, we also saw lessons where too many of you were passive and not fully engaged in learning, and the quality of teachers' marking varies too much across different subjects.

Your personal development and well-being are also satisfactory. There are some good elements such as the quality of relationships between different groups and your appreciation of religious and cultural diversity. You understand the need to be healthy and you said that you feel safe in school. Staff take good care of you and support you well. Senior leaders and governors are keen to ensure that you can work and play in a safe environment and the systems for managing behaviour are satisfactory. However, some of you are still not attending regularly enough.

To help improve your school further we have asked senior leaders to:

- increase the proportion of you gaining five or more A* to C grades, including English, mathematics and science
- increase the proportion of good or better teaching by encouraging you to be more actively involved in your learning and ensuring that marking consistently helps you to improve your work
- ensure that rigorous checks are regularly made by leaders across the school on your academic performance and attendance, and that action is taken to bring about improvement.

You can help by acting on the advice your teachers give you and being more involved in your own learning. Those who do not attend regularly should make more of an effort to do so because this will improve your chances of getting qualifications needed for life after school. Good luck with your examinations this year.

Yours faithfully

Dilip Kadodwala

Her Majesty's Inspector