

Framwellgate School Durham

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114309
Local Authority	Durham
Inspection number	325988
Inspection dates	7–8 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Marianne Young HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	1256
Sixth form	250
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Karen Cromarty
Headteacher	Mrs Joan Sjovoll
Date of previous school inspection	1 October 2005
School address	Newton Drive Framwellgate Moor Durham County Durham DH1 5BQ
Telephone number	0191 3866628
Fax number	0191 3830917

Age group	11–19
Inspection dates	7–8 October 2008
Inspection number	325988

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors together with four Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Framwellgate School Durham is an above average sized secondary school situated on the northern outskirts of the city. Demographic changes means that many more students now come from outside the school's normal catchment area, a number of whom choose to travel some distance in order to attend the school. Most students are from White British backgrounds and very few are at an early stage of learning English. A lower than average number of students are in receipt of free school meals. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average; however, the proportion of students with statements of special educational need is below average. The school has held specialist science status since 2003 and the Science Learning Centre North East is located at the school. High Performing Specialist School status was awarded in 2008. The school has had Training School status since 2004.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Framwellgate School Durham is a good school with significant strengths in its leadership, the personal development of its students and the care and support afforded to them. Partnerships are excellent and these are significantly enhanced by the school's science specialism which provides students with varied opportunities and experiences.

Students have positive attitudes towards learning and their school, which is reflected in their good behaviour and above average attendance. Students socialise well together, with the house and the mixed-age tutor groups contributing significantly towards a harmonious and cohesive community.

Students' current achievement at Framwellgate is good overall and standards are above average. Since the last inspection, students' achievement at the end of Year 9 and Year 11 has given the school cause for concern. When students enter the school in Year 7, their attainment is above average, especially in science, which is due in part to the regular outreach work undertaken by the science department. In 2007, although standards remained above average at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4, senior leaders recognised that students were not making the progress expected of them. Consequently, systems to track progress have been strengthened so any potential problems are quickly identified and effective action is taken when student performance becomes a concern for whatever reason. The significant improvement in students' literacy skills is a good outcome of the work done to raise students' basic skills. The school's effective tracking system indicates that current students are making good progress and are now on track to meet their demanding targets in 2009.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Leaders are determined to maintain and improve further the quality of teaching despite the high turnover of staff in recent years. These changes of staff are of concern to a very few parents; however the school makes strenuous efforts to ensure that students are not disadvantaged by the changes. Through rigorous and regular lesson monitoring and appropriate training, the school provides effective professional development and support where needed. Students are very well supported, especially those who are vulnerable or who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. This support leads these pupils to make very good progress. The school tracks meticulously the performance of all students. Despite this, not all teachers make effective use of assessment information when planning lessons to meet the needs of all students appropriately. Although there are examples of good practice in some subject areas, students do not all know exactly how to improve their work in order to attain higher grades and levels.

The good curriculum reflects the school's specialist status. Courses have been revised so that students can gain appropriate qualifications to secure their future education and economic well-being. A well focused programme with relevant pathways for students of all abilities at Key Stage 4 is particularly welcomed by students, who also spoke highly of the personalised careers guidance programme.

Senior leaders are ably supported and challenged by governors. Together they recognise where the school needs to improve further and they have a clear understanding of how this will be achieved. Lesson monitoring, subject reviews and analysis of students' performance all contribute to the strong and comprehensive self-evaluation undertaken by the school. Despite recent staffing changes the school has maintained direction, ensured that standards remain above average, and is popular within the local community. Overall, it provides good value for money.

Issues from the last inspection have been addressed, built upon and incorporated into the development of the school. These all demonstrate the school's good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 3

Inspectors agree with the school's judgement that the effectiveness of the sixth form is satisfactory. Although standards remain above average, students' achievement is satisfactory. The number of students attaining a pass grade remains high; however, the proportion gaining the higher grades dipped in 2007. Provisional results for 2008 indicate some improvement at both A level and AS level. Since the last inspection, more students are choosing to continue their education into the sixth form and as a result, the ability range of students has widened. The school has responded well to this need by increasing the choice of courses available. Students are able to study subjects which better meet their needs and abilities, preparing them effectively for higher education. Students report that they welcome these curriculum changes and value highly the care, support and guidance they receive. Students are polite, articulate their views clearly and participate well in the life of the school, in the local community and with the excellent partnerships forged by the school. Examples of this work include the 'SLAM' group working to counter bullying and the sports leadership links with local schools. The quality of teaching and learning is good. The regular monitoring and tracking of students' progress enables potential underachievement to be quickly identified and additional support provided. The sixth form is well led and managed. Leaders have accurately identified key areas for improvement following disappointing performance in the past. The school has acted decisively and the systems in place are designed to ensure that students' achievement improves. However, it is too early to evaluate their full impact.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise achievement in the sixth form.
- Ensure that each teacher uses assessment information consistently so that students are given work that is appropriate for them.
- Make sure that all students understand how to improve their work and eliminate the current inconsistent approach between subjects.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Students' current achievement is good overall and standards are above average. In particular, students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make very good progress.

Students enter the school having attained above average results in their primary school. At Key Stage 3 standards overall dipped in 2007. Provisional test results in 2008 for mathematics and science indicate that performance has improved. The school's own assessment data show that more students reached the higher levels in English than in previous years. The school recognises that students make better progress during Key Stage 4 than Key Stage 3 and that there is some variation between subjects. Inspection evidence and the school's own robust tracking system indicate that most students are now making good progress and are well on track to achieve their targets in 2009 in Year 9.

At Key Stage 4, the school's examination results overall were above average in 2007 and similar to the provisional results for 2008. However, in 2008, the proportion of students gaining five

or more grades at C or above, including English and mathematics, fell. Although students made outstanding progress in English, they underachieved significantly in mathematics. The school has responded quickly to identify the problems in mathematics. It also tracks regularly students' overall performance, providing additional support for individuals or groups of students when needed.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Students' personal development including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Students have positive attitudes to school and to their work. They enjoy their time at school especially when lessons are interesting and challenge them to learn. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities benefit significantly from the meticulous attention given to their needs. Behaviour around the school is generally good and attendance is above average. Students conduct themselves well and behave sensibly when moving around between buildings and on the narrow stairways. The school is a calm orderly community where students value the opportunity to sit and talk with their friends at lunchtimes. Students report that they feel safe at the school and understand the need to adopt a healthy lifestyle. This is exemplified both in their choice of lunch and the good proportion of students who take part regularly in sporting activities. The mixed-age tutor groups are valued by students and enable them to mix together and to make friends with others throughout the school. The house system contributes well to this social interaction and students enjoy learning about a range of topics, which often cover moral and social issues, during the regular assemblies. They say there are isolated incidents of bullying and racism, but they know who to turn to for support and issues are dealt with effectively by the staff. Students are keen to make their views known and to influence how the school is run. The school council is active and regularly consulted by leaders. A group of students have formed 'The Beek Card Company', producing a range of cards made from re-cycled materials. This is one of the ways in which students use their entrepreneurial skills to develop their own business and raise money for local and national charities. The school effectively raises students' awareness of the world of work through a number of events and work placements, which are mainly, but not exclusively, linked to the schools' science specialism.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are an important priority for the school leaders who continue to place a strong emphasis on improving practice. A key characteristic of the best lessons is where teachers provide students with a variety of activities, using information about students' abilities to ensure that the challenge is right for all students within the class. This results in students' attentiveness and concentration on learning which, when combined with their generally positive attitudes, produce a strong learning ethos. Learning objectives are clearly understood by the students and progress towards them is monitored during, as well as at the conclusion of, the lesson. Students enjoy these lessons and make good progress towards their target grades and levels. This best practice, however, is not wholly consistent across all subjects. Occasional low level disruption undermines students' learning. This is because assessment information is not used effectively by all teachers to set work that takes account of the full range of capabilities within the class. Consequently, lessons fail to capture students' interests and some tasks have

insufficient challenge. Students respond positively to the intervention strategies put in place, for example the revision classes held after school and before public examinations.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a good curriculum for its students. The Science Learning Centre is used very well to support learning, not just in the science subjects, but across a range of other subjects. Indeed the science specialism is keenly felt across the school especially in the good range of extra-curricular opportunities offered and the involvement of many students. These activities complement the timetabled curriculum well. Many students have enjoyed experiencing and working in real life situations, for example with the Primary Health Care Trust. This enables them to understand and develop workplace skills so that they are ready to meet the challenges of working life.

Students in Years 10 and 11 welcome the three pathway choices that allow them to choose courses which best suit their needs, interests and abilities. This programme successfully helps many students to continue their studies into the sixth form. The school has carefully evaluated the success of some of these courses and plans to introduce others. The school has implemented a successful programme to ensure that students in Year 7 receive a curriculum across range of subjects which meets their needs and ensures their transition from primary to secondary education is smooth. A comprehensive programme of citizenship and personal, social and health education also contributes very well to students' personal development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care, guidance and support that students receive are good and pastoral staff know the students well as individuals. All personnel have received training on child protection procedures and statutory safeguarding checks are fully in place. Students have confidence that staff will act quickly to help them with both pastoral and academic needs. The Achievement Centre makes a significant contribution to the reduction in the number of exclusions. It enables those students who are at risk of exclusion or who need time to consider their actions and behaviour, to work in a fully supportive environment before they return to the classroom. Comprehensive systems are in place for supporting vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or difficulties. There are strong links with outside agencies. Students receive good advice, guidance and support at points of transition, which they appreciate. Induction procedures are thorough and help Year 7 students integrate confidently. The school has thorough systems in place to monitor students' academic progress and provide intervention if needed. Nevertheless, these are not always used consistently by each subject leader, and as a result students do not always understand what they have to do in each subject in order to improve their work and attain higher grades and levels.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Since the last inspection, senior leaders have implemented strong, effective and regular monitoring and evaluation systems. These enable them to identify quickly where improvement and intervention are required. Focused meetings between senior and subject leaders provide

good opportunities to assess subject and student performance. Throughout this process, subject leaders, especially those who are new to their position, are supported and empowered, yet fully accountable in their leadership role. These actions successfully underpin the work of the school and has enabled it to keep on track, despite the significant staffing changes that have occurred during the last three years at all levels throughout the school. The excellent systems in place ensure that the school runs effectively from day to day and continues to maintain its record of above average standards.

Senior leaders are quick to identify where support is most needed, for example where teaching and learning are weak, for new middle leaders or where student performance has become a concern. Consequently, self-evaluation is good in the school. This is clearly demonstrated in the early action taken to improve course provision within and between Key Stage 4 and the sixth form and also in the school plans which are clearly focused on appropriate areas for improvement. Regular monitoring of teaching and learning is undertaken and evidence from this work successfully informs the need for further training and professional development. The school's specialist status contributes in many ways to the performance of the school. It has also enhanced partnership working, including work with national and local organisations and other schools. These links are excellent. Governors fulfil their statutory role well; they are well informed about the school and the progress made by different groups of students.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall	16-19
---	-----------------------	--------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	1	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	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?	2	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2	
The attendance of learners	2	
The behaviour of learners	2	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	

The quality of provision

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	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	2	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	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**

9 October 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of Framwellgate School Durham, Durham, DH1 5BQ

Following our visit to your school, we would like to thank you for making us feel welcome and for speaking to us at various times during the inspection. You told us you enjoy school and making new friends, and appreciate the varied opportunities you can take part in out of lesson times. These views proved very helpful. Framwellgate provides you with a good standard of education and it is satisfactory for those of you in the sixth form. We were pleased to see that many of you work hard in lessons; however, on occasions some of you become distracted and do not concentrate in lessons which means that you do not always do your best.

We noticed that you behave sensibly when moving between the buildings, helping each other and visitors find their way about. You are provided with high levels of care, especially those of you who have particular needs and difficulties. Many of you benefit from all the science events and activities held not only in your school but at national and international venues. You told us that you appreciate the good advice, guidance and support which helps you decide your next stage of education or training.

Mrs Sjøvoll and other senior leaders work hard to ensure you all have the best possible education and are continually working to make improvements. We have asked her and the governors to do the following three things:

- Raise achievement in the sixth form
- Ensure that you are all given work to do that is appropriate for your individual abilities
- Make sure that you know in each subject how to improve your work and thus attain higher grades and levels.

You all need to play your part in helping Framwellgate become an even better school. We hope you continue to enjoy your time at the school and wish you all every future success.

Yours sincerely

Marianne Young

Her Majesty's Inspector