

Framwellgate School Durham

Newton Drive, Framwellgate Moor, Durham DH1 5BQ

Inspection dates 10–11 November 2015

Overall effectiveness **Requires improvement**

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for Pupils	Requires improvement
16 to 19 study programmes	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders have not used all the information they have about the school rigorously enough to challenge performance where it is not good enough.
- The impact of teaching over time is variable, both across subjects and, at times, within subjects.
- Governors have not held school leaders to account effectively for the variations in the progress made by different groups of pupils, especially disadvantaged pupils, boys and middle-ability pupils.
- Disadvantaged pupils and middle-ability pupils, especially boys, do not make enough progress in their learning.
- Monitoring and evaluation of teaching and checks on pupils' performance do not lead to sharply focused actions that generate rapid sustained rates of progress in pupils' learning.
- Middle leaders do not consistently and robustly challenge teachers in their teams to ensure that all pupils and groups of pupils make all the progress they are capable of.
- The quality of provision in the sixth form requires improvement. Attainment is above national averages, but learners do not make enough progress from their starting points.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher and governors have a clear vision for excellence for the school. They communicate this effectively. This motivates staff and pupils alike.
- Governors and leaders have accurately identified those areas of the school's performance that most need improvement.
- Governors and leaders ensure that safeguarding arrangements are secure. Leaders ensure that pupils learn about risks to their health and well-being.
- Leaders organise learning to meet pupils' learning needs. Leaders provide effective personal development opportunities. Pupils are well-prepared for the opportunities and responsibilities of life in modern Britain.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils show respect for each other, whatever their background. They behave well during lessons and social time. Pupils feel well cared for, safe and secure.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching by:
 - developing the quality of lesson planning at all key stages so that challenge for all abilities and groups of pupils is precise and leads to rapid acceleration in rates of progress
 - ensuring that assessment during lessons is sharp and demanding so that teachers re-shape and re-direct learning to promote consistently good or better progress.

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that senior leaders hold middle leaders robustly to account for the achievement of all groups of pupils, especially middle-ability pupils, boys and disadvantaged pupils
 - putting in place a programme to develop middle leaders to sharpen their use of assessment information so as to challenge teachers to accelerate the progress of all groups of pupils, including in the sixth form
 - using monitoring and evaluation processes rigorously to check that planned improvement targets for all key stages are precise, measurable and are being met in a timely fashion.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of the school leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- Leaders and governors know their pupils and staff very well. However, leaders have not made the most of this knowledge to challenge performance with rigour in those areas where it is not good enough. As a result, disadvantaged pupils, boys and some middle-ability pupils do not achieve as well as they should.
- The headteacher and governors are ambitious for their pupils and are determined to provide high-quality care and high-quality education for all pupils. They communicate this effectively to staff and pupils alike, who share this vision. However, ambition is not consistently translated into action with sufficient rigour to bring about sustained and rapid improvement where it is most needed.
- Leaders monitor the work of teachers. However, evaluation at intervals during the year does not lead to sharply enough focused actions with measurable targets to drive up performance. This slows improvement in the rates of progress made by some groups of pupils.
- Middle leaders do not consistently challenge teachers in their teams rigorously enough to ensure that pupils receive good or better teaching all the time. As a result, the impact of teaching is variable, both across subjects and at times within subjects.
- Specific actions by leaders have helped address those areas identified for improvement at the previous inspection. However, these actions have not led to consistently sustained and rapid improvement. Too many pupils attain grades which mask slower progress.
- Leaders in the sixth form have not taken enough action to improve the rates of progress in academic subjects overall. Achievement is variable across subjects. Overall progress in academic subjects from learners' starting points is not good enough. Attainment, however, is above national averages. This supports learners in making successful application for places to study at top universities.
- Governors and leaders work assiduously to make sure that safeguarding arrangements are effective. Appropriate training and procedures mean that only suitable adults are allowed to work with pupils, and staff know what to do if they have a concern about a pupil.
- Leaders are aware of their Prevent Duty to keep pupils safe from the dangers of radicalisation and extremism. Leaders ensure that the personal, health and social education programme is of high quality. As a consequence, pupils say they feel safe in school and that bullying is rare. Pupils' personal development helps them become tolerant young adults, who have respect for others who have different lifestyles or beliefs or come from other cultures.
- Leaders use their knowledge of their pupils and the context of the school to develop a relevant broad and balanced curriculum. Recent redevelopment of the curriculum in Key Stage 3, with its focus on a range of learning skills, including basic skills in English and mathematics, is beginning to accelerate progress.
- The curriculum provides good access to a range of qualifications and further study. The programme for personal, health, social and citizenship education (PHSCE) is well thought through. In part delivered in tutor time and in subjects such as religious studies, history and English, pupils learn about current issues, world religions, different beliefs, cultures and lifestyles. Their learning prepares them well for the opportunities and responsibilities of life in modern Britain. As a consequence, pupils' relationships with their classmates and adults are very positive.
- Leaders ensure that the curriculum in the sixth form reflects the school's values, thus helping pupils gain a wider understanding of adult working life, and provides good opportunities for personal growth. The curriculum in the sixth form encompasses a selected range of work-based and academic subjects that engage and interest pupils.
- Leaders ensure that the curriculum provides effective impartial careers information and advice to pupils at points throughout Key Stage 3 and 4 and in the sixth form. This helps pupils make informed choices for their future study or training. Almost all pupils have a secure next step for education or training when they leave the school.
- Governors ensure that the additional funding made available to the school for disadvantaged pupils and for Year 7 'catch up' is well accounted for. Funded activities are varied and broaden pupils' learning. However, the overall impact of this funding has not enabled disadvantaged pupils to close the gap in attainment with their peers at the end of Key Stage 4 well enough. The school's achievement information for this group shows that in summer 2015, overall progress was well below recent national norms.

■ The governance of the school

- Governors have not been rigorous enough over time in their challenge to school leaders. Challenge has not engendered actions that are sharp and focused enough to drive up standards, particularly in respect of the progress made by some groups of pupils.
 - Governors and trustees, as they develop their skills and knowledge, are increasingly challenging to school leaders to improve performance. Recently, governors are bringing sharper focus to their work.
 - Trustees have managed the difficult financial context of the school with skill. This is leading to a leaner organisational structure, but one which has not brought about the improvements in achievement, which they themselves identify as key priorities.
 - Governors ensure that they have appropriate training, for example in safer recruitment, to put in place procedures to keep pupils safe.
 - Governors and leaders have put in place clear procedures for performance management. Procedures are clearly set out and appropriate staff are trained. Information gathered through this process is used to shape professional development and to make pay awards when this is appropriate.
 - Trustees complement their own skills by securing professional advice to conduct the performance management of the headteacher.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- Teachers do not consistently plan and deliver lessons that challenge all groups of pupils to make good or better progress across the school, including in the sixth form. As a consequence, progress across subjects and in different classes slows.
- Teachers do not always make the best use possible of all the assessment information available to them, either from periodic assessments or during lessons. As a consequence, their planning for all groups of pupils is not refined enough to bring about sustained and rapid progress.
- The effective use of teacher questioning is variable. When it is done well, questions deepen pupils' understanding and extend their knowledge. At other times, teachers too readily accept more superficial and simple answers. In such cases, this slows the pace of learning for all pupils and in particular the most able.
- In some subject areas, teachers plan work at three levels to try to reflect the different levels of ability in their teaching groups. However, pupils do not always choose the right level and are not moved on quickly enough by the teacher to more demanding work. This diminishes effective learning and inhibits rapid progress.
- Teachers' good subject knowledge is accompanied by effective classroom management techniques. Teachers challenge any poor behaviour or lack of attention quickly. As result, pupils behave well, try hard and follow instructions. This contributes to their learning.
- Good teaching was noted by teachers in a range of subjects, for example in physical education and design technology. Similarly, high levels of challenge in a sixth form physics lesson captured learners' energies. Here learners learned rapidly and deepened their understanding.
- Teachers provide written feedback to pupils and time for them to respond, in line with the school's policy. Sometimes feedback comments do not direct pupils towards the most important things to improve, for example such aspects as sentence structure. This has an impact on pupils' work across all subjects. As a consequence, pupils do not improve their work as well as they can. Where feedback is precise and well targeted, pupils' work shows better improvement.
- Teachers' planning to ensure effective learning for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs in mainstream classes is variable in quality. This is because teachers do not take into account all the assessment information they have about pupils to plan learning with precision. Pupils' progress slows when this happens.
- Pupils in the Achievement Centre, the school's provision for disabled pupils and pupils with special educational needs or for others who face specific barriers to their learning, are well supported to tackle the specific barriers they face, and as a result teaching here is effective overall.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupil's personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils develop the knowledge and skills they need to enjoy the responsibilities and opportunities open to them in school and in the future, because leaders ensure that they are well cared for when they have to face personal and study-related issues.
- The knowledge that teachers and other staff have of their pupils underpins a strong network of support for pupils' physical and emotional health. For example, pupils learn about risks to their health, such as the dangers of substance misuse. As a result, pupils confirm that they feel safe, well cared for and are confident that they can always speak with an adult in school. Pupils are sure that they will be listened to if they have a problem.
- Pupils develop increasing self-confidence and self-esteem, because staff encourage pupils to discuss issues taught through the PHSCE programme, and because the school provides a very wide range of external visits and after-school clubs. As result, pupils widen their learning and social skills. Discussion with pupils shows that they are open and confident. Their learning about others' lifestyles, religious beliefs and other cultures helps pupils understand and gain insight into fundamental British values, such as tolerance of and respect for others and the rule of the law in England. This stands pupils in good stead for the future.
- The PHSCE programme is complemented by learning across a range of subject areas. Pupils showed in their discussion with inspectors that they have developed a clear sense of right and wrong and a developing sense of social justice, including for those people in society with protected characteristics under the Equality Act.
- Pupils' awareness of different sorts of bullying helps keep them safe in school. On the rare occasion when it happens, pupils are confident that staff deal with it effectively. Pupils feel safe and well looked after. They say that their learning about such things as cyber bullying and the dangers of sexual exploitation also keeps them safe beyond the school.
- Pastoral leaders secure pupils' well-being further through effective collaboration with a range of agencies and teams such as social services and child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS). Where appropriate, the school makes use of a local alternative provision if a pupil is struggling to remain in mainstream education. As a consequence, pupils are well supported to manage the challenges they face.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils use their learning about right and wrong and the high expectations of teachers to shape their behaviours. While they are well supervised during social time, pupils of all ages show that they are more than capable of regulating their own behaviour. As a consequence, there is a positive, calm and orderly atmosphere in the school, in which the school site is treated with respect, just as pupils show respect for each other, adults and the school.
- Inspectors noted this behaviour, and the school's behaviour logs and discussions with pupils confirm that serious incidents of poor behaviour are few and diminishing in number. Similarly, the number of fixed-term exclusions has fallen significantly since the since period last year.
- The increased focus on good behaviour is being matched by the decrease in absence. Currently attendance is above the national average, although there remains a gap in attendance rates between disadvantaged pupils and others.
- Inspectors evaluated how well the off-site alternative provision provide for pupils if they are placed there. The school keeps an eye on the development of pupils it places there. Pupils settle and re-engage with learning. They benefit from help to take the next steps in education or training successfully.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- The overall progress made by pupils varies widely between groups. School performance information shows that overall and for some groups of pupils, the rates of progress that pupils make during Key Stage 4 are low. In the sixth form, the rate of progress across academic subjects is broadly in line with national averages, and is higher than average in vocational subjects.
- Pupils' attainment when they leave Key Stage 4 and the sixth form is above the national averages.

Attainment in mathematics at GCSE has improved. The proportion of pupils achieving five or more GCSEs at grade A* to C including English and mathematics declined slightly in 2015. However, it has been well above national averages over time and remains so.

- Supported by positive attainment, pupils leaving the school are successful in securing suitable courses of study in further and higher education. There are very few pupils who are not in education or training after leaving the school.
- The gap in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and others is broadly in line with the gap nationally in 2015, but widened over the previous three years. However, the in-school gap in attainment at five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C including English and mathematics between disadvantaged pupils and others in the school remains wide, and has not closed appreciably over the last three years. In 2014, the attainment in mathematics of disadvantaged pupils was approximately two thirds of a grade below that achieved by others in the school and about one third below in English.
- The proportion of pupils who made expected progress in mathematics has risen sharply in 2015 against 2014 figures. The proportion making expected progress in both English and mathematics is now closer to the national averages.
- The proportions of pupils making more than expected progress in English and mathematics are variable. Whilst the proportion in mathematics has remained relatively high and increased, it has declined in English in 2015.
- The current gaps in progress between disadvantaged pupils and others for English and mathematics for pupils in Key stage 4 are large, especially in mathematics. While leaders point to the effectiveness of interventions that are being put in place for identified pupils, school achievement information points to less effective interventions for these pupils in previous years.
- Across all qualifying subjects, those used to calculate overall progress against national norms, the progress made by boys, middle-ability and disadvantaged pupils was significantly below the national norms in 2014 and the school's own performance data show that this is the case again in 2015.
- Assessment information for pupils in Key Stage 3 shows that rates of progress are increasing for all groups of pupils. There is a clear correlation between this and the development of the refreshed Key Stage 3 curriculum. Its impact is also seen in the smaller gaps in progress in core subjects, such as English and mathematics, between disadvantaged pupils and others. The difference in the gap between these groups is similar in English and mathematics.
- The progress made by more-able pupils is not consistent over time. The gap between pupils entering the school at Level 5 in mathematics and pupils nationally who make more than expected progress has grown slightly over three years. Overall the progress made by the most-able pupils is broadly in line with the national average.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are well supported in the school's internal alternative provision. Some aspects of good progress are hidden in published performance data figures, because their achievement in courses that are not covered in national calculations is not included. However, the progress made by this group of pupils overall, including when they attend mainstream classes, is variable, as it is for other groups.
- Achievement in the sixth form reflects the strengths and weaker areas of performance in the main school. Attainment is above national averages in academic subjects, but it is variable from subject to subject. The progress learners make in academic courses is broadly in line with that made by learners nationally. In contrast, both the attainment and the progress made by learners following vocational courses are very high and have been sustained at this level over time.

16 to 19 study programmes

require improvement

- Leaders do not challenge subject leaders rigorously or effectively enough to ensure that learners, especially in academic courses, make good consistently progress. As a consequence, the quality of teaching across subjects has variable impact on learners' learning.
- Leaders have a clear vision for the welfare and achievement of learners in the sixth form, which is fully aligned to the whole school's vision and values.
- Information advice and guidance are strengths of the sixth form. As a result of well-planned programmes, learners acquire wider experiences which support successful applications to top universities. Approximately two thirds of learners applying to study at university were offered a place at their first choice university in 2015.

- The school provides a range of non-qualification activities which enhance learners' wider learning and provide opportunities to develop a range of skills. They contribute to the wider life of the school by mentoring younger learners and acting as role models and prefects.
- The school's work with business partners is highly effective in offering competitive, high-quality internships for about 25 learners each year. As a consequence, these learners develop much deeper knowledge of specific employment sectors and wide-ranging skills related to the world of work. All learners gain insight into world of work through work experience or other work-related activity.
- Personal development programmes, as in the main school, are well planned. Learners confirm that they learn further about how to recognise and manage risk to keep themselves safe. They demonstrate the same open and tolerant attitudes and respect towards others who are from different backgrounds or have different lifestyles and beliefs as their younger peers. As a consequence learners are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Behaviour is good at all times. Sixth form learners act as effective role models for younger peers.

School details

Unique reference number	137696
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10000700

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	981
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	177
Appropriate authority	Excel Academy Partnership
Chair	Professor Mike Fleming
Headteacher	Mr Alisdair Nicholas
Telephone number	01913 866628
Website	www.fram.durham.sch.uk
Email address	enquiries@fram.durham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	18 January 2012

Information about this school

- Framwellgate School is a larger than average secondary mixed academy with a sixth form, for pupils between the ages of 11 and 18.
- The school converted to become an academy in December 2011.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is lower than the national average, but is gradually increasing.
- A very high proportion of pupils are of White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is broadly average.
- The school meets the current floor standards (minimum standards set by the government for standards of attainment and progress in English and mathematics).
- The headteacher has been in post since May 2013.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 41 lessons and attended assembly. A visit was made to a local alternative provider.
- Inspectors talked with pupils at points throughout the inspection to gain their views on how well they are cared for and supported in their learning. During the inspection, inspectors talked with five different groups of pupils. Inspectors also examined some of their work.
- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, other senior staff from the school, some middle leaders and teachers, including some newly qualified teachers.
- A wide range of school documentation was considered as part of the inspection, including records of pupils' progress and attendance. Inspectors reviewed the school's arrangements to keep pupils safe and leaders' self-evaluation documents.
- Inspectors spoke with a group of governors, some of whom are also trustees of the school.
- Inspectors took account of staff survey returns.
- Inspectors also considered 96 returns to Ofsted parent's survey, Parent View, and a small number of written submissions. Inspectors spoke with a small number of parents to gather their views.

Inspection team

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