

Frederick Gent School

Mansfield Road, South Normanton, Alfreton, DE55 2ER

Inspection dates

3–4 June 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Students' literacy and numeracy skills are not sufficiently well developed.
- Boys achieve less well than girls, particularly in English in Year 11.
- Not enough of the most-able students achieve grades A or A* in their GCSE examinations.
- The achievement of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is not as good as it should be in some year groups.
- Teachers do not always have high enough expectations of their students. They do not take sufficient account of the specific learning needs or prior attainment of their students.
- Teachers' marking and assessment are not always effective in helping students to make progress.
- The quality of support given by teaching assistants does not enable disabled students and those who have special educational needs to achieve their best.
- Students' behaviour in lessons is not consistently good. Teachers do not have a consistent approach to managing classroom behaviour.
- Students do not have a good enough awareness of British values such as democracy and the legal system.
- Students' attendance is below the national averages
- The school improvement plan is not as effective as it could be, as it does not enable governors to hold leaders to account.
- Leaders have not done enough to engage parents in their child's progress.

The school has the following strengths

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good.
- Additional funding has been used effectively to accelerate the progress of students' reading in Year 7.
- Students' conduct around the school is good.
- The headteacher has implemented appropriate changes and re-instilled an ethos of aspiration and ambition. She has worked well with governors to begin to raise the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Rates of progress for students in Year 11 are on track to improve this year and are expected to be close to or exceed national levels.
- In 2015, the proportion of students attaining five A* to C GCSE grades including English and mathematics is predicted to improve rapidly.
- Students who study work-related courses achieve well, attend regularly and develop confidence.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 25 lessons; five were jointly observed with members of the leadership team.
- An inspector visited the Alfreton Vocational Academy to observe students attending work-related courses.
- Two inspectors visited several classes to check on students' behaviour. Inspectors also visited tutorial time and an assembly.
- Inspectors scrutinised students' work in mathematics, English, history and science.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders and the coordinator for special educational needs. Inspectors spoke with six trainee and newly qualified teachers and five subject leaders. The lead inspector also spoke with a representative from the local authority and three members of the governing body, including the Chair.
- Inspectors spoke with two groups of students formally and informally with a number of students in lessons and around the school. An inspector also spoke with some of the school's anti-bullying ambassadors. An inspector listened to some Year 7 students read.
- Inspectors took into account the 44 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, and 76 responses to the Ofsted staff survey.
- Inspectors reviewed a variety of documents, including, the school's self-evaluation summary, the school improvement plan, minutes of the governing body, anonymised performance management documents, records of referrals made to external agencies and records on attendance and behaviour. An inspector examined information about the school's predictions for students' achievement in 2015.

Inspection team

Julia Wright, Lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Andrew Vind	Additional Inspector
Amy Jackson	Additional Inspector
Lynn Stanbridge	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- Most students are White British. Very few students come from minority ethnic backgrounds or speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium is below average. The pupil premium is additional government funding for those students who are known to be eligible for free school meals and for those looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is just below average.
- Small numbers of students in Key Stage 4 attend specialist off-site provision at the Alfreton Vocational Academy for two half days a week. They undertake a variety of work-related courses.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' progress and attainment.
- A new headteacher was appointed 18 months ago.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that all students, especially the most able and boys, make the progress of which they are capable, by ensuring that all teachers:
 - have high expectations for all groups of students so that none underachieve
 - make effective use of assessment information to set work that enables all students to make good progress
 - use marking and assessment to promote students' further progress
 - use the support of teaching assistants more effectively to improve outcomes for disabled students and those who have special educational needs
 - take opportunities to develop students' literacy and numeracy skills.
- Improve the quality of behaviour and attendance by ensuring:
 - better attendance for all students, including those who are eligible for pupil premium funding
 - that students' behaviour in lessons is consistently good
 - that teachers consistently address any off-task behaviour in line with the school's policy.
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that leaders provide support and challenge for disabled students and those who have special educational needs
 - strengthening school improvement planning so that governors can hold school leaders to account more effectively
 - developing students' knowledge and understanding of British values more effectively
 - maximising opportunities for engaging with parents.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- Leaders have not done enough to secure students' good attendance. They have recently taken actions to ensure that non-attendance is followed up rigorously. Although there are early signs of improvement, students' attendance is still below the national average.
- The leadership of special educational needs requires improvement. Not enough is done to ensure that all disabled students and those who have special educational needs achieve their best. Until recently, expectations for these students have not been high enough. The quality of support received by these pupils is variable.
- The school improvement plan is not as effective as it could be. It identifies the key actions needed to improve the school and responsibilities are allocated appropriately. However, it contains insufficient measurable success criteria and milestones. This means that governors and external parties cannot accurately measure progress at regular intervals and hold leaders to account.
- Leaders have made concerted efforts to improve the partnership with parents, with varying success. The school has recently introduced behaviour panels and parents' attendance at these is good. However, a third of parents do not attend parent consultation evenings. As a result, not all parents are fully involved in their child's education.
- Students' social, spiritual, moral and cultural development is variable. There is a range of opportunities within the personal, social and health education programme to develop students as individuals and family members. Students have a strong sense of social responsibility; for example, they are keen to help others in the classroom. However, students' awareness of some areas, particularly those relating to British values, requires improvement. Some students were unfamiliar with the legal system and had a limited awareness of the electoral process.
- Students have a variety of opportunities to attend after-school clubs, including Japanese and chess club. Their attendance at these is tracked rigorously. School leaders recognise that not enough students eligible for the pupil premium funding attend these. They have taken appropriate action to ensure greater equality of opportunity but it is too soon to see if these actions have been effective.
- The pupil premium funding has previously been spent too broadly. It has therefore been difficult for leaders and governors to track the impact of this funding for eligible students accurately. Leaders have taken action to ensure that the funding is now targeted more closely and the achievement of these students is starting to improve as a result.
- The headteacher has taken effective action to implement rapid changes to teaching and leadership. She has re-instilled the vision of the school's founder, an ex-miner, to raise the aspirations of children within the community. She has appropriately restructured leaders' responsibilities. A member staff said, 'The headteacher has brought a note of realism to the school.'
- Senior leaders robustly hold subject leaders to account. Subject leaders have embraced the new systems for monitoring the quality of teaching. They recognise the significant role that they play in school improvement and are becoming increasingly effective at managing their subject areas.
- The leadership of teaching is increasingly effective. Teaching is carefully monitored through a number of activities including lesson observations, student progress information and regular scrutiny of teachers' planning. The overall quality of teaching is improving, although there is still variability.
- Performance management arrangements are sound. This academic year, teachers have three highly challenging objectives that refer to the Teachers' Standards. Teachers are now accountable for the progress that their students make.

- Staff training is appropriately tailored to school improvement needs. Subject leaders have opportunities to share good practice through coaching. Trainee teachers speak highly of the quality of school-based training. Teaching is improving as a result.
- Leaders are committed to ensuring equality. Discrimination is not tolerated. The school has received an award for its actions to identify and prevent bullying. Students are highly respectful of each other and tolerant of diversity.
- Students are increasingly well prepared for the next stage in their education. They receive appropriate careers education and guidance through a variety of activities, including work experience and careers interviews. There are limited opportunities for students to access sixth form education within the immediate locality. Leaders have taken steps to work with a local school with a sixth form. As a result, students have a broader range of academic choices after Year 11.
- Leaders have established appropriate systems to track students' achievement. Students are now given highly aspirational targets based on their starting points. Leaders have given appropriate consideration of how this system will be adapted following the removal of national curriculum levels. Staff have a growing understanding of the necessity to use information about students to assist with their planning.
- The curriculum offers breadth and personalisation, and includes a variety of appropriate work-related courses. The curriculum has been adjusted to ensure that all students who are capable of achieving the English Baccalaureate are encouraged to do so.
- Year 7 catch-up funding is used effectively. Leaders have invested in an accelerated reading programme, which is improving the reading levels of Year 7 students.
- School leaders rigorously track the progress, attendance and behaviour of students attending alternative provision.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding meet statutory requirements and are implemented effectively.
- The local authority officer has identified an appropriate level of support for the school and this is highly valued. She knows the school well and has provided effective support to aid the recent leadership restructuring. Local authority consultants work effectively with subject leaders to ensure that their predictions of students' achievement are accurate.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors carried out an audit of their skills and restructured following the appointment of the headteacher 18 months ago. Governors have a range of appropriate experience and provide effective support and challenge to school leaders.
 - The school's self-evaluation summary is honest and governors are well aware of strengths and weaknesses. The understand data about how well the school is performing. Governors are linked to subject areas and make regular visits to their areas.
 - Governors recognise the importance of spending the pupil premium funding effectively. They measure whether the spending is making a difference to the progress made by eligible students.
 - Governors know about the quality of teaching. They have ensured that performance management arrangements are robust so that they can reward good teaching or withhold pay increases, if appropriate.
 - A nominated governor has responsibility for the school's safeguarding procedures and these meet requirements.
 - The school is financially stable.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.

- Teachers do not consistently manage students' off-task behaviour. Students do not always get on with their work quickly enough, particularly if the work is not well matched to their learning needs. Both staff and students felt that different teachers apply different behaviour strategies and that poor behaviour is not always challenged effectively. Some students feel that their learning is slowed by those who are not fully engaged in their learning.
- Overall, student attendance is below national averages. Disadvantaged students are more likely than others to be regularly absent. School leaders have started to follow up the attendance of students far more rigorously. The summer school for Year 7 is an opportunity to reinforce the school's expectations for attendance. There are some early signs that these strategies are starting to have an impact and attendance is starting to improve, particularly in the younger year groups.
- Pupils' conduct around the school is good. They are welcoming and polite to visitors. They are smart and take great pride in ensuring that the school grounds are litter free.
- The proportion of fixed-term and permanent exclusions is decreasing. Student referrals to the 'focus room', due to their unacceptable behaviour, have also reduced.
- The attendance and behaviour of students attending external provision is good. Effective systems are in place to ensure that any non-attendance is monitored.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. The school's arrangements for safeguarding meet statutory requirements. Pupils say that they feel safe and most parents agree. Risk assessments are secure.
- Students have a good awareness of all types of bullying, including homophobic and cyber-bullying. School leaders provide opportunities to ensure that students know how to keep themselves safe online. The school has a comprehensive system for logging incidents of bullying and how these were resolved.
- Students say, and the very large majority of staff agree, that school leaders deal with bullying effectively. Students are confident that they could go to a member of staff and they would address any bullying concerns. Student anti-bullying ambassadors are very perceptive about the issues that can arise.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teachers do not always match activities to students' different learning needs and abilities. They do not make best use of the information they have on students' prior attainment. As a result, teachers do not always have high enough expectations, and students are not provided with sufficient challenge. This constrains students' progress and results in some disengagement.
- The quality of support provided by teaching assistants is variable. Some teaching assistants provide highly effective support, particularly for small classroom-based groups in mathematics and English. When teaching assistants were most effective, it was difficult for inspectors to ascertain which adult was the teacher. Teaching assistants are less effective when they are not fully involved in planning and supporting students' learning.
- The school's strategy to raise standards of literacy and numeracy requires improvement. Not all teachers correct spelling, punctuation and grammar errors and there are limited opportunities for students to produce extended writing. Teachers do not prioritise the development of students' numeracy skills in subjects other than mathematics.
- Teachers' marking and assessment of students' work varies between subjects and teachers. Most teachers make use of the school's marking policy, but too few challenge students' poor presentation and not all teachers' feedback is helpful. Consequently, marking and assessment do not always promote students' further progress.

- Where teaching is less effective, teachers do not challenge students sufficiently well. For example, in science, some teachers do not routinely correct students' misconceptions. As a consequence, students' ability to achieve the top grades is limited.
- Teaching is effective in a number of subjects. For example, in mathematics teachers routinely check students' understanding before they move on. This allows students to develop mastery. In a modern languages lesson, students were encouraged to think through answers together and made striking progress as a result.
- Teachers' use of questioning is an emerging strength. Students respond well to teachers' targeted questioning and value the opportunity to have 'more time or pass it on' if the question is challenging. Students' confidence and concentration are developing because of effective questioning.
- The school is taking effective action to improve students' engagement in reading. Students have a mature approach to the library and use it well to support additional research. Reading is encouraged during form tutor time. Students' reading skills are improving.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Boys do not achieve as well as girls, particularly in English. Leaders have addressed this by organising tailored lessons for boys using suitable texts. Despite these efforts, the difference in boys' and girls' achievement is still too wide in Year 11. However, there is strong evidence that leaders' actions are starting to have an impact on boys' achievement in Years 7, 8, 9 and 10.
- The progress made by disabled students and those who have special educational needs is not rapid enough. Historically, expectations for these students were too low. Leaders have taken recent action to improve the achievement of these students and more are now making greater than expected progress. Their achievement is also improving in the younger year groups.
- The achievement of the most-able students in 2014 was close to national benchmarks. In 2015, the most-able students are expected to make progress above national expectations in mathematics and just below in English. However, the proportion of students achieving the higher grades in these subjects is still not high enough.
- The progress made by students in Year 11 in 2014 was below that expected nationally, particularly in English. However, overall rates of progress for students currently in Year 11 are predicted to improve. Students are expected to make progress much closer to national levels in 2015 in English, and to exceed national levels in mathematics.
- In 2014, the school entered students early for GCSEs in both English and mathematics. This restricted the progress that boys made in English. The school has now ceased this practice.
- In 2015, the proportion of students achieving five A* to C GCSE grades, including English and mathematics, is predicted to improve to 64%. This is an increase of 12 percentage points from the previous year. Students' achievement in science is also improving. These predictions are supported by a strong system of internal and external moderation to ensure their accuracy.
- In 2014, at the end of Year 11, those students known to be eligible for the pupil premium were approximately half a grade behind their peers in both mathematics and English. When compared to the achievement of other students nationally, eligible students were less than one grade behind in English and half a grade behind in mathematics. Leaders predict that the difference in grades will be similar in 2015, since the achievement of all students has risen. This represents an improving picture.
- Students achieve well in work-related courses at Alfreton Vocational Academy. In addition, students who attend these courses are developing their confidence and willingness to try new things. These courses are highly effective in preparing them for their next steps.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	112941
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	461639

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	846
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Brian Cavanagh
Headteacher	Julie Broadbent
Date of previous school inspection	7 March 2012
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