



Frederick Gent School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 112941
LEA DERBYSHIRE LEA
Inspection number 285368
Inspection dates 5 July 2006 to 6 July 2006
Reporting inspector Mr. Shaun Dillon HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary	School address	Mansfield Road
School category	Community		DE55 2ER
Age range of pupils	11 to 16		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01773 811737
Number on roll	911	Fax number	01773 510223
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr. Ross Fletcher
Date of previous inspection	5 March 2001	Headteacher	Mr. Mike Ainsley

Age group 11 to 16	Inspection dates 5 July 2006 - 6 July 2006	Inspection number 285368
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools and two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Frederick Gent School is of average size and has a specialist status in mathematics and computing. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is about average. Relatively few students are eligible for free school meals. The school has a small proportion of students from Traveller communities on roll. Very few pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of students from homes experiencing socio-economic disadvantage is above the national average. Students' attainment when they join the school aged 11 is generally similar to the national average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The overall effectiveness of Frederick Gent School is good. This judgement agrees with the school's self-evaluation. The headteacher, governors and senior managers have made many improvements to the school since the last inspection and they have a high capacity to continue this process. Although the achievement and standards of students in Year 11 in 2005 were below expectations, this was an unusual year. Inspectors agree with managers and governors that several factors beyond their control had contributed to these results. Nevertheless, managers have taken considerable steps in 2005 to 2006 to improve provision and forecasts for the current Year 11 students are higher and more realistic. Inspection evidence indicates that students' achievement is back on track and that they have made good progress in order to catch up. Students are punctual and their attendance is high. Their well-being, personal development and behaviour in and out of lessons are good. They enjoy school and respect each other and their teachers. The school provides outstanding care, guidance and support for its students. Support mechanisms are outstanding. Provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is very good and ensures they make good progress. The exclusion system is effective in reducing inappropriate behaviour in the school, but too many students are away from learning for short periods as a result. The profile of teaching seen during the inspection was good. Many teachers plan lessons well and involve students in a wide range of interesting activities. Whilst teachers and support assistants cater well for the needs of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, not all lessons include sufficiently challenging activities to meet the needs of more able students or to promote independent learning. The curriculum meets students' needs well. The school offers a wide range of vocational options in Years 10 and 11. Many students participate successfully in an extensive choice of clubs, visits and sporting activities. Leadership and management are good. All managers have high expectations of their teams. Although lessons observations are accurate, school managers observing lessons give insufficient attention to students' learning. The school does not moderate these observations fully to ensure that judgements between observers are consistent. Governors fulfil their obligations and have the best interests of the students at heart. Financial management is good and value for money is good. Accommodation is considerably improved since the last inspection.

What the school should do to improve further

- Continue to raise achievement and standards, especially in Years 10 and 11 and particularly for more able students.
- Continue to have high expectations of students' behaviour but work with those who find it difficult to conform and thus reduce the number of fixed-term exclusions.
- Improve the consistency of monitoring of lessons to focus on learning outcomes and the development of students' independent learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement and progress have improved considerably during the last year and are now good. Students generally start the school with average skills, knowledge and understanding. Since 2003, students have made reasonable progress between Years 7 and 9. The results in the national tests at the end of Year 9 show that standards have risen in line with the national picture. The school's provisional results for 2006 in mathematics and science indicate that this trend continues. The focus on improving teaching and learning in Years 7 to 9, particularly in English and mathematics, has helped to secure better standards and progress than in previous years. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress. Much of the current work seen in Y10 and 11 was of high quality but performance has varied considerably over the last five years. In 2005, students' attainment in the GCSE examinations was below average, and a few students made too little progress. In particular, a significant minority of girls failed to build upon the foundations laid in their first three years at the school. Much of this was due to matters beyond the school's control. In response, through a clear analysis of performance data, the school implemented a comprehensive programme to support students in the current Year 11 who were in danger of underachieving. The progress of this cohort is much improved compared with that in 2005. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities again make good progress. Students did not meet their target attainments in 2005, but in 2006 the school has based its challenging forecasts on more reliable data which students are on course to meet.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Students' personal development is good. They have a well developed sense of right and wrong. They behave safely and well around the school and in lessons. The school enforces its code of conduct strictly, and excludes a comparatively high number of students, mainly boys, for misbehaviour. Students' attendance is above the national average and they are punctual to lessons. They enjoy coming to school and get on well with each other and with their teachers. Students feel safe at school and staff deal effectively and promptly with any concerns students have about bullying. The peer listener scheme contributes well to students' feeling of security. The school offers many opportunities for students to contribute to school life and to the wider community. Students participate regularly in charity fund-raising projects. Year councils and the school council enable students to express their views about the school effectively. Students are closely involved both in the appointment of key staff and in the school's self-review process. They have been influential in the introduction of healthy menus and in making water available in classrooms. Many students take advantage of the various opportunities to play in teams and they enjoy sporting activities. Participation in residential trips and music, dance and drama evenings is also high. Students develop good workplace skills. A large majority enters further education, training or employment on leaving school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers have good subject knowledge. They use information about students' abilities effectively to help them progress. This has enabled students in 2005 to 2006 to progress better than in the previous year. Most students behave well in class. In the best lessons they share the teacher's enthusiasm for the topic and learn to work independently. Teachers plan lessons carefully to include a variety of activities and challenges suitable for most students, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities. However, they do not always give enough consideration to the needs of more able students. In less effective lessons, learning objectives are not sufficiently clear, the pace is too slow, and students do not have sufficient opportunities to develop independent thinking. In most subject areas, teachers make good use of information communication technology (ICT) to enhance students' learning. Students know what levels they are currently achieving and they agree future targets with their tutors. Teachers mark work regularly in most subjects, but not all include advice to help students understand how to improve. Regular homework reinforces and extends students' learning. The school recognises that its system of monitoring the quality of teaching and learning has some inconsistencies and is currently engaged in improving it to ensure a greater focus on learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. The school has successfully addressed the issues raised in the last inspection report. The school complies with statutory requirements, with the exception of a daily act of collective worship. The school has worked hard to increase the flexibility of the curriculum in Years 10 and 11 through liaison with two local colleges and the Alfreton Vocational Academy. Students enjoy a wide range of academic and vocational options. They can join in after-school subjects such as Spanish or religious education. The school meets the needs of students from Traveller communities very effectively. Teachers adapt tasks and resources well to meet the requirements of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Learning support assistants frequently provide high quality support in class. Extension activities for gifted and talented students are established and expanding. Students participate enthusiastically in an extensive range of clubs, trips, visits and sport-related activities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school provides outstanding care, guidance and support for its students. Its pastoral care is exemplary. The school responded well to the disappointing results in the GCSE examinations in 2005, when a significant minority of girls seriously underachieved, and recognised that guidance could improve further. Managers have developed an

outstanding system of support mechanisms, including comprehensive monitoring of behaviour and academic progress. This enables earlier intervention with students diagnosed as at risk of failure. Very good provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities ensures that not only their personal development, but also their academic progress is good. The school's personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme is of high quality. Guidance in choosing careers and courses is good. The school has deservedly acquired a reputation for making effective alternative curricular provision for disadvantaged pupils, for students from Traveller communities and for those at risk of not completing their secondary education. It was invited to be a pilot Extended School and works closely and increasingly effectively with other schools and outside agencies to overcome the barriers to learning faced by students and families in the area.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and the governors set clear strategies for improvement and use a wide range of initiatives to implement these priorities. Managers at different levels challenge and support their teams and hold them accountable for the quality of their provision. Lesson observations are mostly accurate and managers observe all teachers at least twice each year. The outcomes of lesson observations feed effectively into performance management reviews and staff development. However, the standardisation of these outcomes to ensure consistency of judgements is in the early stages of development. Governors question senior managers effectively and are very knowledgeable about the school and the communities it serves. The school meets the requirements of the child protection and disability discrimination acts. The school's race relations policy is in place, but the governors do not receive regular reports on its implementation. Communication is highly effective between headteacher, senior managers, middle leaders and other staff. The school collaborates well with other schools on a wide range of issues. Communication and consultation with students and parents are wide-ranging, but feedback to parents on decisions reached by managers and governors is insufficient. Financial management is prudent. Managers and governors have increased reserves to complete the improvement of accommodation and resources. Value for money is good.

Accommodation and resources are of a high standard and are much improved since the last inspection. Most specialist rooms are bright and welcoming, are well equipped and contain vibrant displays of students' work. Many contain high quality equipment and provide a good learning environment. The specialism in mathematics and computing is well managed and it benefits other curriculum areas and other schools. The self-evaluation process is improving to take into account the views of curriculum and guidance teams, departments, students and external stakeholders. It is mainly accurate, but is optimistic in the area of personal development and well-being. The school has a high capacity to continue the improvements it has made.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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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?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	NA

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for the welcome which many of you gave to the inspectors when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed meeting you, seeing how keen most of you were in lessons and finding out about the progress you make at school. We think you belong to a good school. Most of you told us that you enjoy school and feel safe there. Most of you behave well in and out of lessons. However, a few of you have been excluded for a short time. This is a shame, because you then miss out on your education. Your school gives you outstanding care, guidance and support. Many of you join in the wide range of extra activities. You have made improvements to the school through your year and school councils. Most of you make good progress through the school and most of you reach satisfactory standards at the end of Year 9. In 2005, not all students did as well in their GCSE examinations as expected. However, there were external reasons for this beyond the control of the school. Most of your lessons are good. More and more of your teachers are using ICT effectively to help you learn. We were pleased that most of you know the levels at which you are working and the standards which you are aiming to reach. We judge that your school is well led and managed and that your governors and staff work hard to improve your education. Most of your buildings and resources are of a very high standard, especially in mathematics and computing. We liked to see that a lot of your own work is well displayed in many rooms. Your school has improved a lot since the last inspection and we think it has the capacity to improve further. In order to do so, we suggest that the school should do the following things: raise achievement and standards, especially in Years 10 and 11; reduce the number of fixed-term exclusions so that you do not miss out on your education; focus more on monitoring learning in lessons and help you to develop even better skills for independent learning. Best wishes for your future.