

Friern Barnet School

Hemington Avenue, Friern Barnet, London N11 3LS

Inspection dates

30–31 October 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders and governors have successfully addressed the priorities for improvement identified at the previous inspection.
- School improvement planning processes are well established and involve leaders at all levels, including governors.
- The school is friendly and welcoming, and pupils and staff enjoy positive relationships.
- Teaching is effective across a wide range of subjects. Teachers plan well for the needs of different groups of pupils. Some teaching, however, does not present pupils with a sufficient degree of challenge, and good practice is not always shared. In a very few subjects, pupils underachieve.
- Newly qualified teachers and teachers who are new to the school are well supported.
- Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities make better progress than previously.
- Disadvantaged pupils are catching up with their peers. A recent review of how well the school meets the needs of these pupils is currently being analysed by leaders and governors.
- Reading is encouraged, but weaker readers still struggle to decode words, which limits their ability to read independently.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are positive and there is little low-level disruptive behaviour. Pupils are proud of their school and respect the school environment.
- Pupils feel safe in school and the school's systems and procedures keep them safe.
- The curriculum helps pupils to achieve good outcomes. It is supplemented well through a broad choice of clubs and additional activities.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development particularly well. Pupils have a good understanding of modern British society.
- Parents, staff and pupils who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaires express positive views about the school and what it aims to achieve for its pupils.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and pupils' outcomes by:
 - making sure that all groups of pupils are presented with a sufficient degree of challenge
 - routinely sharing the good practice that exists within and between subject areas
 - acting swiftly on the findings of the review of the use of pupil premium funding
 - ensure that weaker readers are given additional support to promote their accuracy and independent reading skills.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders have taken on board the areas for improvement identified in the school's previous inspection report of May 2018. These have rightly been made the key focus of the school's development plan. Leaders can demonstrate the impact of their actions in tackling these challenges. For example, pupils' progress is improving, attendance is rising and exclusions have fallen. Weak teaching has also been addressed, appropriately.
- Leaders have a clear vision for the school. This is shared at every opportunity with staff, parents and the governing body. Regular and interesting newsletters keep parents informed about the school's work.
- The school's self-evaluation document identifies what the school needs to do to improve and identifies what has been achieved so far. This ties in with the school's development plan, which is regularly monitored, evaluated and reviewed by leaders and governors.
- Middle leaders, which comprises heads of faculty and heads of year, share the senior leaders' commitment to improving standards across the school. They ably monitor, evaluate and review the work of their subject areas, and report to governors and the headteacher through detailed written reports.
- Teaching is well led. Teachers use the professional learning communities to discuss current and successful teaching strategies, and to consider ways in which pupils learn most effectively. This is reaping rewards, although there is further potential to share good practice within and across departments.
- Newly qualified teachers speak positively about the good support they receive, as do trainee teachers. They feel fully included in the life of the school, and know where they are making gains in their practice, and what they should do to improve.
- The school's leaders have implemented an academic curriculum to raise pupils' expectations of themselves. Nonetheless, leaders are also keen to promote an inclusive curriculum, and thus they are exploring a range of vocational courses for pupils entering Year 10 in 2019. This is as a result of a recent review of curriculum provision.
- The curriculum is enhanced through a wide range of clubs, which play to pupils' strengths and interests. Additionally, pupils are strongly encouraged to attend extra study sessions led by subject teachers. These sessions have contributed towards the raising of academic standards.
- Additional funding for disadvantaged pupils and for those who have SEN and/or disabilities helps to improve the outcomes for these pupils. A review of the impact of governors' spending of the pupil premium funding has recently taken place. Barriers to learning for this group of pupils have been identified, but a clear action plan arising from this review has yet to be finalised.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development very well. Colourful and vibrant displays adorn the corridors and classrooms, which celebrate equality and pupils' diversity. The curriculum promotes fundamental British

values and contributes to pupils' understanding of SMSC development effectively. Inspectors observed a thought-provoking assembly on Black History month and observed a moving Year 7 history lesson in which pupils learned about the impact of shell shock on soldiers who fought in the First World War.

- Parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, expressed many positive comments about the school. For example, one comment received simply stated, 'My daughter is very happy and looks forward to going to school every day.'

Governance of the school

- Governors have a good understanding of what the school does well, and of the challenges that still remain. Through their full governing body meetings and their sub-committees, they receive regular updates about the school's progress.
- Minutes of governing body meetings show that governors have the skills and knowledge required to present an appropriate degree of challenge and support when questioning the school's leaders about the impact of their actions.
- Governors regularly attend school events, and ensure that they keep in touch with pupils. They do this by inviting members of the school council to address the full governing body when it meets.
- Governors have ensured that the school meets current requirements relating to the safeguarding of children.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Staff in the school have a secure understanding of their roles and responsibilities in keeping children safe. Training is regularly updated, and staff are vigilant in their duty to protect children from harm.
- Inspectors' scrutiny of case studies relating to child protection matters shows that these records are well maintained and kept in a secure location. They contain details of discussions and any involvement of external agencies and show whether the case has been resolved.
- The school's single central record of staff recruitment checks is well managed and is compliant with current requirements.
- The school boundary is safe and secure. Arrangements for checking visitors to the school are rigorous. Pupils say that they feel safe in school, and the curriculum teaches them how to keep themselves safe, including from radicalisation.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Pupils typically experience good-quality teaching during their time in school. This is helped by strong relationships between teachers and pupils. Pupils say that they appreciate that their teachers make teaching interesting and enjoyable, which encourages them to learn.

- Teachers have good subject knowledge. Pupils told inspectors that they enjoy learning, particularly when teachers show a great passion for their subject. They say the modern languages teaching team are some of the 'most driven' teachers in the school.
- Questioning is used well by teachers to check that pupils understand what they are learning. Teachers do not accept a simple 'yes' or 'no' to their questions, and require pupils to provide detailed responses, either in spoken or written form.
- Teachers have a sound understanding of the different pupils they teach. For example, they usually adapt tasks to meet the needs of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities so that they can do the work. However, some pupils would benefit from being provided with work that consistently challenges them.
- Additional adults are used well to work with targeted pupils. They liaise with teachers to ensure that they are able to maximise their role and impact in lessons.
- Teachers use a range of techniques to check on pupils' progress. These include providing them with the marking scheme as they attempt tasks in lessons, and requiring them to complete work at home. This enables teachers to identify any gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding.
- Teachers adhere to the school's assessment policy. This was evident from inspectors' scrutiny of pupils' books across a range of subjects. Most pupils respond well to their teachers' written guidance and comments. This encourages pupils to rectify any errors and misconceptions and promotes resilience when they fail to get things right the first time.
- Reading is taught well through a wide range of subjects, including English. Inspectors were impressed when listening to the most able readers, but the school's weakest readers struggle with decoding words, which limits their ability to be independent readers.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils are well cared for in school, and say that there is always someone they can talk to if they experience any problems.
- Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe through assemblies, 'drop-down' days, where normal lessons are suspended, and tutor periods. Inspectors observed key stage 3 pupils sensitively discussing the reasons for bullying, for example.
- Bullying is not a common occurrence in the school. When it does happen, pupils told inspectors they know who to report it to, and are confident that it will be dealt with promptly.
- Pupils of all abilities are offered a wide range of opportunities to develop their leadership skills and to give something back to the school. Responsibilities include those of dance leaders; sports leaders; mathematics ambassadors; digital leaders; and peer mentors. Leaders take account of pupils' views of their learning through the use

of 'student learning consultants'. Pupils value the opportunities they are given to share their views.

- The school promotes pupils' mental well-being well, and there has been an emphasis on making pupils more aware of their own mental health through the use of assemblies. Pupils value the presence of a school counsellor, and say that they are able to speak to the counsellor as and when required, knowing that the service is discreet.
- Pupils who follow courses in alternative provision are well supported to overcome their barriers to learning and achieve well. Leaders receive regular reports on their attendance and progress.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils move around the school sensibly, paying due regard to the safety of other members of the school community. They show an interest in their learning, which means that teachers teach with very few interruptions.
- Pupils wear their uniform smartly. They speak proudly about their school. Pupils respect their teachers and respond well to their high expectations.
- The numbers of pupils who have been excluded from school for fixed periods of time has reduced sharply. The use of the school's internal exclusion room has contributed to this reduction. Referrals to this room have not decreased as sharply, but the room serves pupils' needs well. Pupils have an opportunity to reflect on their actions before they are reintegrated into lessons.
- Pupils' attendance has improved, and is now broadly average. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent from school has decreased.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils make good progress over time. Improvements in teaching have contributed to this. Although progress dipped at the end of key stage 4 in 2017, it picked up again in 2018.
- Inspectors' scrutiny of pupils' books, alongside the school's own information on pupils' achievement, shows that progress is good and continues to improve. Pupils achieve well in English and mathematics, and in a wide range of additional subjects.
- Pupils have made consistently outstanding progress in modern foreign languages for a number of years. Pupils' progress in business studies and in computing has been much less strong over time.
- The differences between progress made by disadvantaged pupils in the school and other pupils nationally are diminishing, and this is particularly noticeable for pupils in key stage 3. Barriers to these pupils' progress are now better identified, and the publication of a comprehensive strategy to address their needs is imminent.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are making improved progress. Although the leadership of this area has suffered some considerable instability, teaching experience meets pupils' needs well. The appointment of two specialist SEN teachers has

contributed to these improvements, together with a more strategic use of teaching assistants in the classroom.

- Pupils' progress is not yet outstanding due to the variations in progress in a few subjects, but also due to the fact that pupils are not always challenged through the teaching they experience. This area has been identified as a key priority to address this year.
- Pupils who attend alternative provision or who are home-tutored make suitable progress. Leaders check regularly on their progress and their safety.
- Pupils are well prepared for the various stages of their school career. Pupils told inspectors they feel that the quality of support and guidance they receive when making their subject choices is of a good quality. Pupils are well prepared for their next steps when they leave school at the end of Year 11.

School details

Unique reference number	101345
Local authority	Barnet
Inspection number	10055201

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

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	810
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ann Woodhall
Headteacher	Simon Horne
Telephone number	020 8368 2777
Website	http://www.friern.barnet.sch.uk/
Email address	school@friern.barnet.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	18 April 2018

Information about this school

- Friern Barnet School is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding is almost double the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is below average. The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is above average.
- A small number of pupils attend full-time alternative provision. These provisions include: The Pavilion Study Centre, Westminster Kingsway College and The College of Haringey, Enfield and North East London. A few pupils are also home-tutored.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed lessons or parts of lessons, some of which were jointly observed with senior leaders, across a range of subjects and year groups. They also observed an assembly and several tutor periods.
- Inspectors looked carefully at pupils' books during lessons.
- Inspectors heard four Year 7 pupils read, and discussed with them how they were supported in their development of literacy.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, other leaders and members of staff, and they spoke to four groups of pupils.
- Inspectors met the chair and vice-chair of the governing body.
- Inspectors took account of 110 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including free-text responses, 55 responses to the staff survey and 76 responses to the pupil survey.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and scrutinised a number of documents, including those relating to the school's self-evaluation, as well as minutes of governing body meetings, improvement plans and school information on pupils' recent attainment and progress.
- Inspectors also considered behaviour and attendance information, and policies and procedures relating to SEN, pupil premium funding, the Year 7 literacy and numeracy catch-up premium, safeguarding and child protection.

Inspection team

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Fiona Abankwah	Ofsted Inspector
Sue Cox	Ofsted Inspector

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