

The Friary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124422
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	367429
Inspection dates	16–17 February 2011
Reporting inspector	Janet Palmer 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	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1287
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	217
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Headteacher	David Lister
Date of previous school inspection	17 October 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. The inspection team observed 39 lessons and 38 teachers. They held meetings with staff, groups of students, the School Improvement Partner and the Chair of the Governing Body. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation including policies and records relating to the safeguarding of students. They analysed the responses to questionnaires from 208 parents and carers, 170 students and 64 members of staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key questions.

- Are students making sufficient progress at Key Stage 4, particularly in mathematics?
- How well do teaching activities meet learning needs?
- How accurate is the school's self-evaluation, particularly of the effectiveness of teaching and learning?
- What is the capacity of leaders and managers to drive improvements across the school?
- How effective is the sixth form and what is the capacity to sustain improvements?

Information about the school

The Friary is a larger-than-average community school which has had arts and sports specialist status since 2006. Most students are White British. A small proportion of students are from minority ethnic groups and the percentage learning English as an additional language is very low. The school has a higher than average percentage of students with physical disabilities although the overall percentage of students with

special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average. The school has been awarded Healthy Schools Status. The headteacher was appointed in September 2009.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

The Friary provides students with satisfactory level of education. The provision of care, guidance and support is outstanding, resulting in good outcomes for students' personal development and well-being. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are particularly well provided for.

Students' academic achievement is satisfactory. When they join the school in Year 7, students' attainment is just above the national average which is the case when they leave in Year 11, representing satisfactory progress overall. Students from more disadvantaged backgrounds and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve well because they receive particularly good care and support.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The school rightly identifies teaching as a key priority for improvement and has introduced a range of strategies to support this, especially in science. These interventions have met with some success, including in mathematics and English, but improvements in teaching and learning are not sufficiently well embedded across the school to ensure most students make good progress. Students' progress is monitored but this information is not sufficiently well analysed and used to ensure that targets are appropriately challenging and provision

meets students' needs. Assessment, marking and feedback are sometimes good but are inconsistent. This means that students do not always know what they need to do to improve.

Strong collaboration with key specialist services ensures that the students with special educational needs and/or disabilities attend school regularly and thrive. Students feel safe in school. Behaviour is good and many students enjoy positions of responsibility. The curriculum is good and contributes well to students' well-being. Effective partnerships with neighbouring schools and businesses have enhanced the range of options.

Senior leaders and managers share a clear vision which forms the basis of their work. However, this vision and how it is best achieved is not embedded across the school. Middle managers show growing confidence and skill in their roles but for some, quality assurance is not as effective as it should be. Lesson observations focus too much on the extent to which students are active and engaged in the classroom and too little on how much progress they are making in their learning. Self-evaluation is satisfactory although the school has judged the quality of teaching and learning to be better than it is. Governance is satisfactory. The governing body has recently reviewed its committee structure to enable it to more effectively support and challenge the school. The school has focused on improving areas of weakness and there is a trend of improvement in key areas such as mathematics indicating that capacity for further improvement is satisfactory.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged as satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve and sustain the progress students make by:
 - ensuring lessons are appropriately challenging and result in significant gains in learning
 - making sure that assessment, including marking is rigorous, consistent and has an impact on learning
 - improving the use of targets across the school so that they are an integral part of raising expectations and achievement
 - prioritising actions to improve the quality of teaching and learning and agreeing measurable success criteria

- o ensuring that leaders at all levels rigorously and consistently monitor, evaluate and improve the performance of their teams.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

Over the past three years students have left the school with results that are just above the national average although the percentage who gain 5 A*-C grades at GCSE including mathematics and English has declined to be in line with the national average. In 2010, an above average proportion of students gained higher grades in mathematics and English literature, but in science the proportion fell significantly below the national average. In lessons, the majority of students make satisfactory progress. No particular groups of students significantly underachieve.

Parents and carers support students' view that the school is a safe and caring environment. Students understand well the factors that have an impact on health and well-being and many engage in the wide range of extra-curricular sports. They demonstrate good commitment to improving the school and wider community through activities such as the mentoring of younger students, representation on the student council and involvement in the many musical and theatrical performances. Students' good social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is enhanced by activities such as inter-faith week and international exchanges. Students are prepared well for their future economic well-being, learn financial literacy and enjoy a range of work experience and enterprise activities.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	2
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to	2

their future economic well-being Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Although there are instances of good teaching, in too many lessons there is insufficient challenge and pace of learning. A disproportionate amount of time is spent on low level tasks and valuable teaching time is wasted. In the best lessons, teachers use information from the tracking of students' progress to ensure that work meets their needs; they use questioning well to build knowledge and understanding and employ information and communication technology effectively to add pace and interest.

The curriculum provides appropriate choices for students at both key stages. The school offers a wide range of extra-curricular clubs, events, overseas trips and sporting activities, some of which are targeted for specific groups of students such as the gifted and talented. Participation rates are high, indicating good student interest.

Very strong pastoral systems ensure that students' personal development is closely monitored and support is provided where need is identified. The very well considered transition arrangements from primary school are much appreciated by students and their parents and carers. The school has excellent links with a range of local agencies to support and sustain the learning and personal development of students facing challenging circumstances. This work is deeply embedded at all levels and results in good outcomes for these students.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis. The headteacher's ambitions for the school are clear to staff and are beginning to be responded to. Monitoring is a regular feature but does not always highlight sufficiently well the key priorities that lead to improvements in students' progress. The governing body has a sound knowledge of the school but is less secure in interrogating data that give important messages about the school's performance. Middle managers are becoming increasingly accountable for the performance of their teams and there are some examples of good practice.

Effective liaison with parents and carers contributes to students' achievement and well-being, particularly for the most vulnerable. Parents' evenings are well attended. The school has developed a wide range of partnerships leading to improvements in curricular provision and well-targeted support from external care agencies. The directors of the specialisms make an effective contribution to the school by sharing good practice, enriching the school curriculum and broadening the school's profile in the wider community. Safeguarding procedures are robust and effective. The school includes issues about safeguarding in the curriculum, including internet safety, so that students have a strong understanding of risk and how to keep themselves safe. The school has analysed well its role in assisting community cohesion and tackling discrimination. Students report that bullying is not a problem and that racism, sexism and homophobia are not tolerated. Plans are in place to improve community activities beyond the local area to include more global and multi-cultural links.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2

The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Sixth form

In 2009 students did not attained the grades expected of them at A level or attain sufficient higher grades at AS level. However, recent developments in provision and leadership of the sixth form have led to improvements in the 2010 results in many subjects. New initiatives have been introduced such as a tutor system and the monitoring of attendance but these developments are too recent to indicate a sustainable impact on outcomes. Students appreciate the range of curriculum options and enrichment activities, the good transition arrangements from school and helpful support in preparing for their future.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	3
Taking into account:	3
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	3
The quality of provision in the sixth form	3
Leadership and management of the sixth form	3

Views of parents and carers

Approximately 16% of parents and carers gave their views and most responses were supportive of the school and its management. A minority of respondents did not agree that the school helped them to support their child's learning. A similar minority did not agree that the school dealt effectively with unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors judged behaviour to be good.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Friary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 208 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1287 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	55	26	140	67	12	6	1	0
The school keeps my child safe	65	31	132	63	9	4	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	78	38	110	53	18	9	2	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	64	31	123	59	16	8	3	1
The teaching is good at this school	48	23	145	70	15	7	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	42	20	130	63	32	15	1	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	45	22	128	62	23	11	2	1
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	54	26	130	63	7	3	2	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	53	25	142	68	9	4	2	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	49	24	116	56	26	13	4	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	38	18	138	66	16	8	2	1
The school is led and managed effectively	43	21	132	63	16	8	2	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	69	33	126	61	10	5	2	1

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of

completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9

All schools	13	43	37	8
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New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement: the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.

Attainment: the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.

Capacity to improve: the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.

Leadership and management: the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.

Learning: how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.

Overall effectiveness: inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.

- The school's capacity for sustained improvement.
- Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.

- The quality of teaching.
- The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.
- The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.

Progress: the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



18 February 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of The Friary School, Lichfield, WS13 7EW

After our visit to your school, I would like to share our findings with you and thank you for your friendly welcome and for taking time to talk to us.

The Friary is a satisfactory school. It has several good and some outstanding features. We were pleased to hear that most of you enjoy coming to school and that you appreciate the excellent care shown by staff and the opportunities you have to join in the wide range of extra-curricular activities. The curriculum is good, with many options at Key Stage 4 to meet your needs. You attend well and told us that you feel safe and secure in school. Your behaviour is good around the school and many of you contribute by taking on responsibilities or representing the school in sports and performing arts.

At the end of the visit, we found that your school needs to improve certain things in order to be more successful. We have asked the school's leaders to make sure that you make faster progress and achieve higher grades. You enjoy many of your lessons but

are not always challenged to achieve your very best. You told us that you learn best when lessons are lively, when your understanding is checked, and when you are shown how to improve your work. We noticed that you also enjoy opportunities to discuss your targets and that this gives you confidence to tackle more difficult tasks. We have asked school leaders and managers to check that lessons meet your needs more fully.

You, too, can help the school to improve by continuing to attend regularly and by thinking more about what you are learning in the classroom and what you need to do to improve.

Best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Janet Palmer

Her Majesty's Inspector

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