

Prendergast-Ladywell Fields College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100747
Local Authority	Lewisham
Inspection number	354883
Inspection dates	7–8 December 2010
Reporting inspector	Peter McGregor

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	816
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Commodore Jonathan Cooke
Headteacher	Mel Whitfield
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Manwood Road Brockley, London London SE4 1SA
Telephone number	020 86901114
Fax number	020 83141859
Email address	a.byrne@ladywellfieldscollege.lewisham.sch.uk

Age group	11–16
Inspection dates	7–8 December 2010
Inspection number	354883

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 1234 234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

T: 0300 1234 234

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2010

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by five additional inspectors. They observed 40 lessons taught by 39 teachers. Inspectors held meetings with groups of students, staff and governors. They observed the college's work, and looked at development planning, college policies, information about students' performance and minutes of governing body meetings. The team received and analysed questionnaires completed by 65 parents and carers, 50 staff and 156 students.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following.

- How well students achieve in lessons, particularly White British boys and girls.
- Whether students' attainment in English and mathematics is high enough.
- The impact of the college's work on students' behaviour and attitudes.

Information about the school

Prendergast-Ladywell Fields College is smaller than the average secondary school and is part of a hard federation called the Leathersellers' Federation of Schools. It opened two years ago in purpose-built accommodation and became a specialist arts college a year later. The proportion of students from ethnic minority backgrounds is above average, predominantly Black British Caribbean and Black British African. Proportions are also above average for those known to be eligible for free school meals and for those speaking English as an additional language. An above average proportion of students have special educational needs and/or disabilities, mainly moderate learning difficulties or those associated with behavioural, emotional and social issues and speech, language and communication. The proportion with a statement of special educational needs is below average. Staff turnover has been high in the recent past, as has the number of students entering the college other than into Year 7. The college is national winner of the Citizens UK award in 2010.

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

2

Main findings

Prendergast-Ladywell Fields College provides a satisfactory quality of education that is improving rapidly. Since its opening, and under the strong leadership of both the college headteacher and the federation's executive headteacher, transformational changes are taking place. Although not all yet fully in place, these are having a marked impact on the students' education. The college is a community where all are striving successfully to improve attainment and progress.

The students' low attainment reflects a past history of underachievement and staffing continuity issues. Their progress and achievement are now satisfactory. In several subjects progress is good, such as music and art, and students for whom English is an additional language are particularly successful because of the high quality support they receive. Although teaching was good or better in a majority of lessons observed, the quality is satisfactory overall because of inconsistencies in how well teachers cater for individual needs, involve students in their learning, mark work and set useful, challenging homework tasks. The management of teaching and learning is very effective in bringing about improvements, taking rigorous action where needed. Lessons are monitored regularly, students' work is scrutinised and data on students' progress are used to identify both strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning.

Students behave well in lessons and around the college site. When a few do misbehave, the firm and immediate response, which includes restorative justice, is successful. Students are polite, welcoming and take great pride in their college, which they say has improved greatly over the past two years. Their involvement in promoting a high quality of life is outstanding. The college council is a genuine voice for students, and senior leaders have listened to it; a much improved and good curriculum has been introduced this year in response to student requests. Attendance is average and increasing year by year. Punctuality remains a concern. The quality of pastoral care is good and appreciated by students and their parents, resulting in a college ethos of strong cooperation by all parties. Students show good levels of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Child protection procedures and actions are outstanding, helping to ensure that students feel safe on their journeys to and from college, as well as within the site. Senior leaders and governors ensure that safeguarding students has the highest priority, developing very useful links with many external agencies. A cohesive community has been established where discrimination in any form is not tolerated and students of all backgrounds value one another. A high proportion of new staff has been inducted effectively into the college over the past year, though recruitment in certain subjects remains difficult. Through accurate self-evaluation, the headteacher and senior leaders have identified common aims towards providing a high quality of education. With the support of staff, they have brought

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

about improvements in the key areas of progress, teaching and behaviour and all are aware of the urgent need for further change. There is good capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment, particularly in English, mathematics and science, by the end of the current academic year and increase the rate of progress through:
 - improved teaching that focuses on higher expectations and work that matches more effectively the range of students' needs that focuses on higher expectations and work that matches more effectively the range of students' needs
 - greater involvement of students in their own learning
 - better marking that provides clear guidance on the how to improve
 - providing good quality homework tasks, according to the college policy.
- Resolve short-term staffing difficulties through a rigorous recruitment campaign.
- Improve punctuality by embedding systems thoroughly, rewarding good punctuality and engaging parents in implementing the new arrangements.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Lesson observation evidence shows that students make satisfactory progress in their work. Students say how much their behaviour has improved this year, which is enabling them to enjoy learning and to do well; instances of disruption are few. Key factors in this are the staff's very effective use of behaviour management systems, with a strong focus on praise, and students' appreciation of the consequences of their actions. In a few lessons, progress was outstanding. Students collaborated extremely well in a Key Stage 3 history session discussing political systems and responded to challenging targets, learning much from each other as well as the teacher. The progress of White British students, who have underachieved in the past, is improving through support focused on enhancing their self-esteem and expectations. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities do well when receiving specialist support; their overall progress is satisfactory due to inconsistencies in teaching. In most lessons students listen quietly and want to learn but progress is restricted at times because they are insufficiently engaged.

The proportion of students attaining five or more good GCSE grades was low in 2010, which represents significant underachievement, even when their low attainment on entry is taken into account. Staffing difficulties, particularly in English, mathematics and science, resulted in a discontinuity in learning which restricted students' achievements. Although largely resolved this academic year, a legacy effect means that successful intervention ♦ catching up on gaps in knowledge for individuals and groups of students ♦ has been key to the current positive picture. A significant number of students joined the college in Year 11 during the past academic year, which gave the staff little opportunity to redress shortcomings in their knowledge and understanding. Available data, based on robust assessment practices, show that students' progress is now good in Key Stage 3 and

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

satisfactory in Key Stage 4. Students are on track to meet the school's appropriately challenging targets for GCSE results in this academic year.

Students state clearly that they feel safe, confident that any fears they may have, such as about bullying, will be taken seriously and dealt with urgently. Exclusions are reducing, reflecting the caring college ethos and several excellent systems introduced to promote their well-being. A Year 11 student represented many when she stated, 'I feel absolutely safe here. The teachers protect us.' Students have a good understanding of how to live healthy lives, appreciating the good quality food provided at breakfast, break and lunchtimes. About half the students are involved in out-of-hours sport and all take part in competitive games in school time. Most year groups have two hours timetabled physical education each week and GCSE physical education is the college's most popular option choice. ♦ The national recognition by Citizens UK, a community alliance working towards ending poverty, improving housing and making society safer, reflects the students' outstanding commitment to being responsible citizens both in and out of college. Although English and mathematics attainment is not yet high enough, it is improving and students present themselves well, with confidence, enthusiasm and obvious enjoyment, which represents satisfactory workplace skills overall. Students of a very wide range of faiths, cultures and backgrounds get on very well together, valuing similarities and differences. They appreciate that as well as having rights they also have responsibilities, and show a strong understanding of spiritual and moral principles. In an assembly, students spontaneously applauded a member of staff who suggested her own mother as a role model, showing their reflective and mature approach.

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

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
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	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
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?

Most teachers have good subject knowledge and generally use it well to plan work that meets examination board requirements and provide accurate answers to students' questions. ♦ Many teachers question students well, helping them to identify areas of weakness in their understanding. Where teachers talk too much and do not plan for or provide work that meets the needs of all the students in each class, building on their prior knowledge, progress is slower. When teachers have left, and replacement staff with appropriate expertise have not been available, progress in learning has been interrupted with consequent lower attainment. Although teachers mark most of the students' work they do not often give guidance on how to improve the quality. They do not always follow the guidance of the college homework policy, so some students have insufficient opportunity to consolidate their learning or further their knowledge through research.

The curriculum, introduced this academic year, has both depth and breadth and meets students' needs, with an appropriately high priority for developing literacy and numeracy skills. Provision is satisfactory for the development of students' information and communication technology skills. Positive elements of the curriculum include two modern foreign languages, a valuable personal, social, health and citizenship education course and an emphasis on music and art, reflecting the college's specialist status. A restructured Key Stage 4 options system enables all students to select courses that challenge them and provide them with the qualifications they need for the next stage in their lives. Science

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

courses have been rationalised to maximise students' chances of GCSE success and careers advice is well planned and useful. Vulnerable students are particularly well catered for by a wide range of guidance from college and external staff. A highly successful 'sports academy' for these students helps to raise their self-esteem and confidence as well as sporting prowess. Extra-curricular music, art and sport, and a range of other clubs, including technology, are popular and successful.

Links with the many primary feeder schools help to achieve a smooth transition into Year 7. A substantial amount of time is invested in finding out about every new student so that their needs can be met. Staff, both teaching and non-teaching, review students' welfare and progress in carefully structured meetings to identify what steps are required. Based on this high quality communication, care, guidance and support for students are rapid and substantial. Strong links with a special school add to the expertise available in caring for the students. Good procedures to improve attendance are resulting in lower persistent absence rates, but the punctuality of a few students at the start of each day is not satisfactory. Both staff and students value highly the role of the community police based in the college, who are fully integrated into college life and add an extra dimension to both good order and guidance. The good pastoral care extends beyond the college boundaries. Students themselves have gained the support of local shopkeepers, who provide 'safe havens' for any who might feel apprehensive on the way home. As students leave college each evening, pastoral staff walk with them, travelling some distance away from the site.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher, with the support of the federation executive headteacher, governing body and the senior leadership team, has established a very caring ethos where students feel safe from bullying and any form of aggressive action. This has been achieved through the rigorous implementation of a 'zero tolerance' approach, appreciated by the students, their parents and the staff. The safeguarding of students' welfare is outstanding. A clear vision of what they can aspire to is embedded in the college, among both staff and students. There is a good awareness of current strengths and areas of weakness and the need to maintain the drive for improved attainment. Almost all pastoral and subject leaders are effectively adapting practices in their areas to match the very high expectations in the college. Senior leaders hold to account those for whom they are responsible, for continuing rapid improvement.

The governing body, shared with the other Prendergast colleges, is effective. Governors know the college well and challenge senior staff, measuring success against performance

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

indicators. They have received the evidence they require to indicate a substantial improvement in students' attainment this academic year. Statutory duties are carried out well, including safer recruitment. ♦ Partnerships within the federation are strong and productive; shared expertise in subjects such as English is helping to improve attainment. The college values local authority support and that from consultants who are supporting change and improvement. It is working hard at engaging parents more in their children's education. The numbers attending parents' evenings and signing their children's planners have increased greatly. Half-termly newsletters, electronic communication, and responding quickly to queries, are all part of this successful strategy. A highly cohesive college community has been established where students' differing backgrounds are celebrated. Senior staff work closely with local residents and businesses, the headteacher spending some time each week promoting these links. Contacts with schools abroad, including fund raising for a Kenyan primary school, are well established and growing. The promotion of equality of opportunity is apparent in the positive manner in which vulnerable students and those for whom English is an additional language are supported. The gap between achievements of differing groups is narrowing as high expectations of all students are carried through into teaching and learning. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
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	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Views of parents and carers

A very small proportion, about 8%, of the parents and carers responded to the questionnaire about the college. Most of these were positive about the quality of education provided for their children. The greatest strengths in their views are their children's enjoyment, how safe they feel and the leadership and management of the college, points with which inspectors entirely agree. The very few concerns expressed

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

covered a variety of areas and were not, in the main, endorsed by inspection findings. Inspectors do agree, however, that students' attainment in English and mathematics is not yet high enough.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Prendergast-Ladywell Fields College 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 65 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 816 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	40	62	22	34	2	3	1	2
The school keeps my child safe	31	48	34	52	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	23	35	39	60	2	3	1	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	18	28	39	60	6	9	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	12	18	47	72	3	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	15	23	40	62	7	11	1	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	15	23	40	62	8	12	0	0
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)	14	22	40	62	4	6	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	17	26	37	57	7	11	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	25	38	35	54	3	5	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	10	15	42	65	3	5	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	30	46	28	43	1	2	2	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	31	48	28	43	5	8	0	0

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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 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. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

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:	<p>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.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ 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.



9 December 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Prendergast-Ladywell Fields College, Lewisham SE4 1SA

Thank you for making us so welcome in your college. We enjoyed hearing your views about your education. You told us how much the school has changed for the better in the last two years, how you now feel very safe because adults care for you, and that you all know the headteacher and think she is doing a good job. A few of you said that there is some misbehaviour but staff sort problems out quickly and fairly.

These are the main things that we found.

The college provides you with a satisfactory and improving education.

Your progress is satisfactory and getting better.

Standards in English and mathematics are not high enough yet.

You behave well and the college deals with misbehaviour very well.

You attend regularly but some of you are not good enough at being punctual.

Your college council is very important in helping to bring about improvements.

You have great pride in your college and have been extremely successful in winning a national citizenship award.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. A number of lessons were good or better, but sometimes work, including homework, is not well matched to what you already know or does not involve you enough in learning. Marking does not always make clear how you can improve.

Problems finding new staff in some subjects have caused underachievement.

The headteacher, executive headteacher and the staff are committed to making your college as good as possible.

We have asked the senior leaders to make sure that work you are given meets your needs, is marked helpfully, and that you are sufficiently involved in lessons and homework. We would like to see the college try even harder to find replacement teachers when some leave. We would like you to continue to behave well, have high expectations of what you can achieve and to improve your punctuality.

Yours sincerely

Peter McGregor
Lead inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 1234 234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.