

Pendle Vale College

Oxford Road, Nelson, Lancashire, BB9 8LF

Inspection dates

3-4 October 2012

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Given their starting points, students make good progress during their time at the college.
- Teaching is good in the large majority of lessons and some is outstanding. This is having a positive impact on the attainment and progress of students.
- The academic and personal support provided to students whose circumstances make them most vulnerable and those who are disabled or with special educational needs is a strength of the college and enables them to make good progress.
- Attendance rates have improved significantly over recent years.
- Students are very well cared for. Bullying is rare and students feel very safe in the college. This, together with good behaviour in lessons and around the college, promotes a very cohesive community throughout the college.
- The quality of leadership and management from senior leaders and governors is good. They are clearly focused on driving continued improvement of teaching and student achievement. Consequently, these aspects have improved markedly since the previous inspection.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- A small minority of teaching requires improvement and not enough teaching is outstanding.
- Teachers do not always make sufficient use of information from tracking students' attainment. Teachers' expectations are sometimes too low for some students and consequently their rate of progress slows.
- Students have not been given enough opportunities to develop and apply their writing skills across a wide range of subject areas.
- There are not enough opportunities for students to develop their independent learning skills and take more responsibility for their own learning.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 36 lessons taught by 36 teachers. Three observations were conducted jointly with members of the senior leadership team.
- The inspectors held meetings with four groups of students, staff, three members of the governing body and had a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors observed the college's work, including the college's self-evaluation evidence and development plans, documents relating to behaviour and safeguarding, minutes of meetings of the governing body, internal and external students' progress data and students' work.
- The inspectors took account of the 20 responses from parents recorded in the on-line questionnaire (Parent View), together with the 255 responses to a parental survey conducted by the local authority.

Inspection team

Alan Parkinson, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Jane Holmes

Additional Inspector

Patrick Feerick

Additional Inspector

Paul Latham

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Pendle Vale is an average sized secondary school.
- The proportions of students from minority ethnic backgrounds and those whose first language is not believed to be English are well above the national average.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium is above the national average.
- The proportion of students supported through school action is above the national average. The proportion of students supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below the national average.
- The college meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The college uses Burnley College to provide alternative provision for a very small number of students.
- The college has achieved the Arts Council Award and in 2011 achieved the Investor in People Bronze Award.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Eliminate the small minority of teaching that requires improvement and increase the proportion of outstanding lessons to further raise students' achievement by:
 - providing more opportunities for students to take control of their learning and develop as independent learners
 - building on existing good practice to enable students to further develop their writing skills across all subject areas.
- Ensure that data from tracking students' attainment is used consistently and effectively in all lessons and across all subject areas to lead to higher expectations and increase students' achievement.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Although the proportion of students achieving five or more GCSE passes at A* to C grades, including English and mathematics, is below the national average, the progress made by students is good. Students enter the college with attainment that is significantly below the national average in English and mathematics.
- Standards achieved at the end of Year 11 show an upward trend in attainment and achievement over recent years.
- The college has been proactive in developing literacy skills across all subject areas. This has shown a positive improvement in the development of reading and oral skills but less so in the development of writing skills. The college is developing clear strategies to improve the literacy skills of students on entry into Year 7, through one-to-one reading sessions and the work of student literacy leaders.
- The college has a robust system to monitor and track the attainment and progress of all groups of students that helps to identify key areas for improvement and enable better targeting of support and expectation. However, the use of this data to enable all student groups to make the maximum progress is not consistently used across all subject areas.
- Students supported by the pupil premium are making good progress and the gap between different groups of students is continuing to close. Disabled students or those with special educational needs achieve well in English and mathematics and in comparison to other students.
- Students whose first language is not believed to be English and those who are at an early stage of learning English are supported well. As a result, these students are making good progress in their language development and are able to learn effectively in all subjects.
- The percentage of students leaving college and entering employment, education or training is well above the national average. This reflects that they are well prepared for the next stage in their educational career.

The quality of teaching is good

- In the best lessons where sometimes outstanding teaching was seen, teaching is very well organised and planned. There is a good pace of learning and teachers use questioning effectively to challenge and check understanding and use resources to meet individual students' needs. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge.
- The strong focus on literacy promotes and develops students' reading and speaking skills well. However, in some lessons writing skills are less well developed; opportunities are missed in subject areas to develop their skills through extended writing activities. Students have good oral skills and can explain themselves well. In many lessons, teachers give students the opportunity to develop their artistic and creative talents and they respond positively.
- Good relationships between students and teachers and between students themselves, promotes positive attitudes to learning where students seek to give of their best in lessons.
- The marking of students' work has improved since the previous inspection and in the best examples provides very clear feedback to students on what they need to do to improve. Students know their target levels and how well they are doing.
- Teachers' standards are being met well in the majority of good and outstanding lessons but less so in the few lessons that require improvement. This was particularly the case when relevant data was not used in lessons to secure a close match to differing needs and abilities and so ensure challenging work for all students. In these lessons students' progress slows.
- Teaching assistants make a significant contribution to the learning of lower-ability students and those who are disabled or with special educational needs, enabling them to achieve well in

comparison to other student groups.

- In a few lessons where teaching was less effective, teachers do not provide sufficient opportunities for students to contribute to their own learning to enable them to develop their independent learning skills.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Behaviour in lessons and around the college is good and reflects the very positive relationships between students and adults, treating each other with courtesy and respect. This promotes a very cohesive community within the college. Students in all year groups feel very safe in college. They have a clear understanding of the different forms of bullying and report that bullying is rare. When any instances of bullying do occur they are dealt with quickly and effectively.
- The responses to the parental survey provided by the school and to Parent View indicated that a very large majority of parents supports the view that students behave well in school, they are not bullied, they are well cared for and they feel safe at college.
- The college has clear and effective behaviour policies. The rewards and sanctions systems are clearly understood by students. The college organises a number of reward trips for students for good behaviour and attendance, such as the trip to the Jubilee Concert at Buckingham Palace. There has been a reduction in the college's exclusion rates. Scrutiny of behavioural records and discussions show that behaviour is good over time too.
- The college provides opportunities for students to develop as responsible individuals. Some make a significant contribution to the college community by taking on positions of responsibility, such as on the student council, the ECO Team, youth parliament and as games captains.
- The significant improvement in attendance rates over the last three years is continuing. There has been a good reduction in the level of persistent absence. Punctuality to college and to lessons is good although the social nature of the students means that, for a very small minority of students, there is sometimes a delay in moving between lessons and getting to lessons on time after breaks.
- The effective partnerships with parents and external support agencies are a strong feature of the college's work. In particular, the effective support provided to address the varied personal and social needs of the most vulnerable students and those who are disabled or with special educational needs is a key strength of the college and valued by the students. They particularly value the caring relationship with their key worker.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, senior leaders and the governing body have a clear vision for the college and have accurately identified the college's strengths and areas for improvement through the effective self-evaluation processes. There is rightly a strong focus on teaching and learning and this has resulted in the upward trend in attainment and achievement.
- The college has a comprehensive and robust system of monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. The college is developing its performance management policies further to strengthen the links between the national standards for teachers and salary progression. The performance management of teaching is closely linked to the college's programme of professional development which is a strength of the college and valued by staff. Opportunities to show case work and develop high quality resources enable good practices to be shared across departments.
- The college has a broad and balanced curriculum that appropriately meets the needs and aspirations of its students. Literacy development is a strong feature of the curriculum. The college has focused on reading and speaking skills and students' progress in these areas is good. However, writing skills are less well developed because it has received less attention until

recently.

- The college makes good use of alternative provision to provide appropriate courses for a very small number of students and takes appropriate steps to ensure that their individual needs are met.
 - The college provides a good range of enrichment such as the 'maths challenge', the language department trip to Berlin and interviewing foreign football stars in their own language. There is a full range of extra-curricular activities with the sports specialism being a particular strength of the college.
 - Students study a wide variety of different cultures, religions and beliefs, promoting their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. This is evident through their recognition of the difference between right and wrong, the consequences of their actions and the empathy and understanding they show for other people's point of view. This results in a very cohesive community within the college. Students are proactive in raising funds for charities, such as Jeans for Genes day.
 - Through the work of the school advisor, the local authority has provided very effective support to the college's self-evaluation processes and literacy development programme.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - governors have a clear understanding of the college's strengths and areas for development through their active engagement in the college's self-evaluation processes
 - the governing body provides good support and challenge to senior leaders and managers and has a clear focus on securing further improvement in teaching and learning to maximise students' achievement. Performance management is used effectively to set challenging targets and evaluate progress towards its objectives
 - governors ensure that funding for those eligible for the pupil premium is effectively allocated
 - governors undertake their statutory duties effectively. Safeguarding procedures and policies meet statutory requirements.
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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	134989
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	406579

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 - 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1030
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John David
Headteacher	Steve Wilson
Date of previous school inspection	27 September 2010
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