

Philip Morant School and College

Rembrandt Way, Colchester, CO3 4QS

Inspection dates 24–25 April 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Some groups underachieve. Middle and lower ability students and those eligible for the pupil premium, and some of those in need of extra help with their learning, do not make good enough progress.
- Teaching requires improvement because, too often, tasks set for students lack challenge and so fail to motivate students to work hard. Teachers' marking does not help students make good progress.
- The sixth form requires improvement because achievement is not consistently good across the range of subjects.
- Staff do not always follow the academy's behaviour policy or procedures for recording the follow-up actions taken; there is low level disruption to learning in a minority of lessons.
- The academy's view of achievement and teaching is over-generous because its leadership, including governance, does not focus sharply enough on the link between teaching and students' progress.
- The steps taken by senior leaders and governors to improve the quality of teaching and raise achievement have not had their intended impact. This is partly because target setting is not ambitious enough.

The school has the following strengths

- The proportion of students securing five higher grade GCSEs including English and mathematics is significantly above the national average.
- The proportion of students making expected progress in English and mathematics is significantly above average.
- Higher-ability students do well.

Information about this inspection

- This was an unannounced inspection; the academy was contacted at 8am on the first day of the inspection and the inspection team arrived shortly after.
- Inspectors were aware during this inspection that a serious incident, allegedly linked to the setting, is under investigation by the appropriate authorities and the police.
- The inspection team observed 54 lessons including eight joint lesson observations with senior leaders. In addition, inspectors assessed students' behaviour around the academy throughout the working day.
- Meetings were held with the Principal, the senior team, students, the vice chair of the governing body, and nominated staff.
- Inspectors considered 157 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View). The academy did not inform the inspection team that it had issued the voluntary staff questionnaire provided by Ofsted; nor did it provide the questionnaire returns for consideration by inspectors.
- The inspection team observed the academy's work and scrutinised statistical information about students' achievement, attendance and exclusions. HMI conducted a joint scrutiny with a deputy headteacher of a random sample of the students' books. In addition they reviewed the academy's analysis of how well it is doing, the academy development plan and minutes of governing body meetings, and examined senior leaders' observations of teaching.

Inspection team

David Jones, Lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Janet Thompson	Her Majesty's Inspector
Caroline Pardy	Additional Inspector
Anne White	Additional Inspector
Anthony O'Malley	Her Majesty's Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The academy is larger than the average secondary school.
- The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is half the national figure. Similarly, the proportion who speak English as an additional language is a third of the national figure.
- The percentage of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium (the additional funding provided by the government to support particular groups of students, including those eligible for free school meals) is below the national average. A small number of these students are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of students registered by the academy as disabled or with special educational needs is below the national average, as is the number with a statement of special educational need who are supported at school action. The number receiving additional support at school action plus is half the national average.
- A local authority-funded specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs provides support for 16 hearing impaired students. The students are taught in mainstream classes, supported by specialist staff.
- The academy has specialist status in technology. It meets the minimum standards required by the government (floor targets).
- The predecessor school converted to academy status on 1 November 2011. When the predecessor school was last inspected by February 2010, it was judged to be good overall
- The academy uses the alternative provision at Colchester Institute.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen the quality of teaching by ensuring all lessons provide:
 - tasks that offer levels of challenge suitable for students of all abilities
 - questioning that motivates and engages the students' involvement
 - marking that follows up on prior learning and guides students' progress.
- Improve the progress made by middle and lower ability students and those in need of extra help with their learning by ensuring that:
 - students have suitably ambitious targets, and that the progress made by individual students and particular groups is reported to the governing body
 - senior and middle leaders routinely check students' progress in lessons and by scrutinising the quality of the work in their books.
- Improve the progress made by sixth-form students by ensuring that:
 - the quality of teaching is good or better in all subjects
 - national data are used to set suitably challenging targets for each student and every subject
- Improve behaviour by ensuring that:
 - procedures for recording incidents are followed consistently
 - all staff apply the academy's policies so that low level disruption in class is eliminated.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because, although the overall proportion of students making expected progress in English and mathematics was well above the national figure in 2012, too many students did not make the progress expected across the full range of subjects. Higher ability students do well and make good progress, but this is not the case for too many students with low or average starting points, particularly in mathematics.
- Attainment on entry has been significantly above average since the academy opened. In 2012, the percentage of Year 11 students who secured five higher grade GCSEs including English and mathematics was significantly above average. Standards are above average when measured by the points gained in the students' best eight public examinations, but are on a declining trend.
- Overall results in English and mathematics were also significantly above average in 2012, but standards in other subjects are more variable. The academy makes some use of early entry to English and mathematics; in English this helps students to pursue the highest grades.
- The academy provided the names of students who take vocational courses at a local alternative provider (Colchester Institute). However, it was unable to provide precise information on their starting points and progress.
- During this inspection, inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning were reflected in the quality of work seen by HMI and a senior member of staff in the jointly conducted scrutiny of work. Variability in the quality of teaching lies at the core of these variations in students' achievement. In lessons, students' progress required improvement in more than half of the classes visited.
- The progress made by hearing-impaired students and others who are disabled and who have special educational needs, including the small number of students who have a statement of special educational need, requires improvement. In 2012, the small number of Year 11 students with a statement of special educational need made good progress. However, current academy data on the progress of those who have special educational needs is more variable. Students note the variations in the effectiveness of this support.
- The progress of those students in need of extra help, including those who receive support at school action and school action plus and those in the care of the local authority requires improvement. Targeted support, in part provided by additional government funding (the pupil premium) has helped secure some limited improvements to close the gap in performance between these disadvantaged students and other students. In 2012 the performance of these disadvantaged students was a full GCSE grade below the rest of the students in the year group.
- Standards in the sixth form were just below the national average in 2012. Students' progress at A level and AS level was just above average but was well below average for level 3 vocational courses. Achievement in the sixth form requires improvement.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, including in the sixth form, varies between subjects; this is clear from the scrutiny of the students' books, their rates of success and the observation of teaching during this inspection. The academy's view of the quality of teaching is notably more positive but does

not match with the variations in standards and students' progress evident in examination results.

- Teaching is strongest in English and mathematics but is less consistent in science, humanities and some of the vocational subjects. Two-fifths of teaching seen during this inspection was good or better; a small number of lessons were either outstanding or inadequate.
- The support that hearing-impaired students receive from staff in lessons varies in quality and is not always well planned or at the right levels to ensure students make good progress in their work. There is some well-planned specialist tuition linked to the students' statements of special educational needs, but this is not always built upon by other staff.
- Notable strengths in teaching included: detailed marking and assessment in the upper school and sixth form; strong subject knowledge which is used to ensure resources are relevant and interesting, and allow students to have both academic and emotional engagement with the lesson; obvious enjoyment of lessons by students – particularly art, drama and higher ability sets in the upper school and sixth form. Good practice, evident in 'Oasis' is helping students at risk of exclusion or persistent absence to achieve well.
- Key weaknesses were linked to shortcomings in lesson planning. When teachers' plans focused on what students were to do rather than on what they should learn, students were kept busy, but their work was neither challenging nor interesting. This was particularly evident when students were all set the same task or activities, with no consideration for their different aptitudes or prior learning.
- Where lessons were dominated by teachers talking, when students did contribute, weak questioning meant that they gave short responses that did not give them the opportunity to show the depth of their understanding or share their own ideas.
- In a number of lessons mundane activities led to students chatting with one another and occasionally disrupting learning. In these lessons there were few opportunities for effective independent and collaborative work. A sample of science books seen showed very few opportunities for independent learning or scientific investigation.
- The work scrutiny conducted jointly by senior staff and HMI noted that the work in a range of books shows students copying out text and limited opportunities for extended writing. In too many lessons work was often unmarked, comments were unhelpful or failed to guide improvement.
- Despite being a key element of the academy development programme, literacy is not developed consistently across the curriculum. Too often writing skills, punctuation and presentation do not show good standards of literacy or good progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- In the best lessons, students have a positive attitude to their work, but their level of engagement, and in some cases their behaviour, varies with the quality of the task available.
 - Attendance has risen and is currently in line with the national average. This improvement is the result of appropriate monitoring of attendance, clear systems, and improved communication with parents and carers. Punctuality at the beginning of the academy day is good, and to lessons is
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appropriate.

- Students move around the site calmly and gather in easy social groups during breaks and lunch periods. Students have a very good understanding of safety matters, particularly e-safety and appreciate the guidance from house staff and the local Police Liaison Officer.
- Behaviour management was inconsistent in the lessons observed and low-level disruption limited learning on some occasions, an issue raised by some students who spoke with inspectors. Students also noted some bullying but nearly all felt action was taken.
- Heads of house plan support for students effectively. Sound policies and guidance exist to follow up on behaviour incidents. HMI reviewed the current pupil logs presented by the academy and noted that some staff do not always follow the academy's procedures for recording individual cases.
- Staff supervision is low key but students clearly appreciate the staff interest in them as individuals and the personal support provided. Parents and carers who responded to the Parent View questionnaire were positive about the academy: nine out of ten felt their child was happy and was safe in school, although one in five parents expressed concerns regarding bullying.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The Principal and his senior team work hard; eight out of ten parents and carers who responded to the Parent View questionnaire were positive about the quality of leadership.
- The monitoring of teaching by senior staff is organised but does not consistently take account of the quality of the work in students' books and of the actual progress being secured. As a result the senior staff view of teaching over time is overly positive. The senior leaders worked alongside the inspection team in the joint evaluation of teaching and learning; when considering evidence in this way, the views they expressed matched the judgements given by the inspectors.
- Pupil premium funds are used to provide intervention support and mentoring. The improvements made in English and mathematics have been supported by this additional government funding, but records of what has been spent and the outcomes secured are imprecise. For example, no breakdown was presented on the impact of the funding to support the significant number of students from forces families.
- The school's own evaluation of its effectiveness is overly positive. The fundamental flaw is that target setting is not sufficiently challenging and some groups underachieve, and the seriousness of this is underestimated. Too many middle and lower ability students and those eligible for the pupil premium, and some of those in need of extra help with their learning, do not make good enough progress.
- The range of subjects available to students and how they are organised is appropriate. However the senior team chose to maintain a range of vocational courses that lie outside the list of government approved subject accreditations. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural opportunities provided for students in lessons, extra-curricular activities and educational visits are good.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors make regular visits and have been on training to help them understand how the academy is performing. However, the governing body does not provide effective challenge on achievement because governors accept the information available from the senior management team, which is overly positive and masks the variations between groups of students. Governors check that teachers' progress through the pay scales is related to the academy's view of teaching effectiveness but fail to link this to weaknesses in the progress of groups of students. They set targets for the Principal, and check how well these are being met against the data available to them. Governors have an overview of how the pupil premium funding is being spent but did not notice that the academy website fails to provide the required information on the pupil premium funds available to support the children of service families. Budget monitoring is effective. The governing body ensures that requirements for the safeguarding of students are met.
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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	137619
Local authority	N/A
Inspection number	413413

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

Type of school	Academy converter
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1619
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	235
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lorna Kean
Headteacher	Roger Abo-Henriksen
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01206 545222
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