

Prendergast-Hilly Fields College

Hilly Fields, Adelaide Avenue, London, SE41LE

Inspection dates 6–7 November 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Students' achievement in Years 7–11 is excellent. They make outstanding progress so that standards they are reaching overall in their GCSE examinations are considerably higher than the national average.
- Students do exceptionally well in English and also make outstanding progress in mathematics, well above typical expectations.
- Teaching is of a very high quality. Teachers have very high ambitions for all of the students and support them to meet very challenging targets and to develop as confident, independent learners.
- The school is a harmonious community in which everyone enjoys learning together and is determined to achieve well.
- Students behave exceptionally well around the school and in lessons. They show high levels of respect and courtesy towards each other and to their teachers and other staff. They feel very safe in school.
- The wide range of extra-curricular activities on offer, combined with the relevant, exciting and varied experiences offered through the curriculum, promote the excellent social, moral, spiritual and cultural development of the students.
- Leaders at the school have a relentless focus on continuing to improve the educational experiences offered to the students and raising the high standards of achievement even further. They continually review the performance of students and staff and take decisive action when necessary.
- Governors are fully committed to providing the best possible education for students at the school. They provide strong support and rigorous challenge to the school leaders.
- The sixth form is good. Achievement is good and improving, and the curriculum is developing to meet the needs of the growing number of students on roll.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 41 part lessons, ten of them with senior staff.
- They observed behaviour around the school, visited the library and scrutinised students' work.
- They held meetings with the headteacher and executive headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, groups of staff, two members of the governing body and representatives of the local authority. Discussions took place with groups of students, both formally and informally.
- The inspection team scrutinised school documents, including the school's own evaluation of how it is doing, the school development plan and statistical information about students' achievement, attendance and exclusions.
- Inspectors considered 66 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), along with a survey of parental views conducted by the school. They analysed 31 staff surveys.

Inspection team

Ann Short, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Valerie Houldey	Additional Inspector
Noureddin Khassal	Additional Inspector
Babrul Matin	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is a smaller than average girls' school with a large co-educational federated sixth form. Students join the sixth form from other schools beyond the federation.
- It is part of the Leathersellers' Federation of three schools with a shared governing body.
- The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding for those known to be eligible for free school meals, looked after students and those from armed service families) is slightly larger than average. There are currently 14 looked after students in the school, and no students from service families.
- Ten Year 7 students are currently eligible for catch-up funding, which is for students who did not attain Level 4 in English or mathematics at the end of primary school.
- The school is ethnically diverse, with a much larger proportion coming from minority ethnic groups than average. The largest groups come from White British, Caribbean, African and any other White backgrounds.
- The proportion who speak English as an additional language is much higher than average, although few are recent arrivals in the country.
- The proportions of disabled students and those with special educational needs supported through school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs are lower than average.
- No students are currently attending provision off site.
- The school is a specialist music and languages college. Ten per cent of places in Year 7 are offered to students who show particular aptitude in music.
- The school meets the government's current floor targets, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement in the sixth form so that it is outstanding by ensuring that:
 - students make equally rapid progress in all subjects
 - all students are well matched to the courses they study.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Students start the school with levels of attainment which are only just above average. They make excellent progress in Years 7–11 in many subjects so that they achieve exceptionally well in their GCSEs. The proportion gaining 5+ A*- C including English and mathematics is consistently well above the national average and improved significantly in 2013.
- Achievement in English is exceptional, and in mathematics it is also outstanding. The proportions of students making and exceeding expected levels of progress in both subjects are high compared to national averages and the proportions achieving A*- C grades at GCSE are significantly above the national averages, and are especially high in English.
- Achievement in the sixth form is good overall and is improving. Strategies are in place to raise achievement further and make sure that students make rapid progress and reach challenging targets in all subjects.
- Effective programmes to promote literacy development and encourage a love of reading, combined with advice and mentoring from teachers and the librarian, help to ensure that students read widely and often.
- All groups of students in the school achieve very well, including the most able. The percentage of students achieving the highest grades is rising, both at GCSE and A level, as a result of the high expectations of the school.
- Pupil premium funding is now effectively used to promote the achievement of eligible pupils, for example through individual mentoring and one-to-one tuition in mathematics, and the provision of individual music lessons in this specialist music college. The achievement of these pupils at GCSE is now above the national average for all students, and the gaps in achievement compared with their classmates are closing, including in mathematics and especially rapidly in English.
- The progress made by disabled students and those with special educational needs has improved rapidly because they are well supported and because the school has high aspirations for them. These students make better progress in English and in mathematics than all students nationally.
- Students who speak English as an additional language make excellent progress in line with their classmates because of high expectations and very good teaching.
- The majority of students supported through the Year 7 catch-up funding make faster progress than classmates, so that they develop the skills necessary to help them to succeed.
- Students receive excellent advice and guidance at all stages of their school careers. This, combined with their well-developed skills in communication, reading, writing and mathematics, ensures that they are exceptionally well prepared for the next stages in their education, training or employment. A high proportion go on to prestigious universities.
- The school does not enter students early for GCSEs in English and mathematics.
- There are no students currently attending courses off site.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- As a result of outstanding teaching over time, all groups of students make excellent progress during Key Stages 3 and 4. This high quality teaching promotes exceptionally strong attitudes to learning.
- Teaching over time in the sixth form is good overall, with examples of outstanding practice. This is contributing to the good and improving progress students make.
- Teachers and students have very high expectations about what they can achieve. Teachers set challenging and interesting work and action is taken quickly to support students who are not meeting their targets. Students report that the level of challenge is just right so that they can have confidence in trying their hardest.
- Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and plan lessons carefully, using a variety of teaching

methods and stimulating resources so that students learn very well. Students are motivated by the enthusiasm of their teachers. Occasionally, the pace slows when teachers talk too much.

- Students are well supported through sequences of activities which provide structure to promote independent learning. For example, in a Year 13 History lesson, good teaching of essay structure enabled students to talk confidently about techniques for putting together historical arguments. In a Year 9 French lesson, students made rapid progress in learning about regular and irregular verbs through group work about a French poem.
- Relationships between students and between students and teachers are exceptionally good. Students trust and respect their teachers and their classmates, so that learning is a shared experience which is enjoyed by all.
- Teachers often check progress during lessons and talk to students very effectively about how they can improve their work. In a Year 11 science lesson, the teacher immediately picked up when some students were confused and intervened swiftly with further explanation and questioning so that all made excellent progress.
- Examples of rigorous and helpful marking which give students clear guidance about how to improve were seen, and many teachers make sure that the students pay attention to the marking so that it contributes to the rapid progress they make. However, the quality of written marking and written dialogue with students is not consistently good across the school.
- In the best lessons, questioning is used extremely well to develop students' thinking and learning and to promote discussion. In a Year 12 geography lesson, probing questions helped students to evaluate low emission developments in Brazil. In a Year 11 mathematics lesson, clear explanations, followed by searching questions and group discussion, promoted excellent understanding of how and when to use particular mathematical formulae.
- The school has thought carefully about how best to use additional adults in the classroom to support the learning of students, and the help they provide is very effective in raising achievement.
- Homework is purposeful and promotes independent learning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Students have exemplary attitudes to learning. They show high levels of motivation in lessons, enjoy their learning and want to do as well as they can. They work very well with their classmates and support each other to make rapid progress.
- No time in lessons is wasted in managing behaviour. Students have a clear understanding of the expectations of the school and student planners are well used to reinforce this. There is a clear behaviour management system which is used consistently by all teachers when this is necessary. There are few exclusions from school. Staff, students and parents all agree that behaviour in the school is very good.
- The learning and caring ethos of the school is exceptionally strong and promotes the school motto of 'Trouthe, Honour, Freedom and Curteisye'. Students are respectful and polite at all times and behave sensibly and in a mature manner around the school. They are given many opportunities to take responsibility and develop leadership skills.
- Students all say that they feel very safe in school. They talk about the sense of community and family and the helpfulness of teachers and other students. There is very little bullying but any that is reported is dealt with quickly and effectively and by discussion so that it does not reoccur. Students have a very good understanding about how to keep themselves safe, for example when using the internet.
- Attendance is above average and students arrive at school and to lessons on time, organising themselves to travel between the two sites so that no learning time is lost.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher, executive headteacher and senior leaders lead by example and consistently reinforce the school's high expectations. Staff, students and parents all agree that the school is very well led and a very happy community. Staff and students are proud of the school.
 - The very recent completion of an exciting new building on one site has been efficiently managed so that the focus has remained on achievement and learning.
 - There is a collaborative approach to improving teaching and learning which balances the sharing of good practice with rigorous monitoring. Effective training in evaluating the quality of teaching ensures robust intervention to make teaching outstanding, and leaders at all levels are empowered to provide appropriate and tailored support to help teachers to improve their practice. Teachers report that they feel well supported. Their professional development is closely matched to the classroom needs of individuals, and progression up the salary scale is linked to their success in ensuring students meet their challenging targets.
 - The school makes an accurate analysis of its own performance and leaders correctly identify where improvements should be made, taking swift and decisive action when necessary to bring these about.
 - The curriculum at Key Stages 3 and 4 is broad and balanced with a good range of choices at Key Stage 4. It is sensitive to the needs of students with lower attainment in English and mathematics so that all are enabled to make very good progress. The curriculum in the sixth form is developing, with new courses recently introduced to meet the needs of the changing intake as the sixth form grows in size as a federated sixth form. Leaders are aware of the need to ensure that the needs of all learners are met and that this is an area for further development.
 - There are many additional activities on offer beyond the school day, including a wide range of trips and visits. These help to promote the excellent social, moral, spiritual and cultural development of the students. The annual Key Stage 3 residential trips are particularly effective in promoting the learning ethos of the school. Aspirations are raised through university trips and visits. One student spoke passionately about the confidence she has gained through participation in the specialist subjects of music and languages. Weekly music assemblies encourage students to perform in public and maintain the high profile of this specialism.
 - The effective approach to closing achievement gaps demonstrates the school's commitment to equality of opportunity.
 - The school works closely with parents to develop strong relationships between school and home which support the learning and social, moral, spiritual and cultural development of the students.
 - The school has worked closely with the local authority, seeking additional support in providing an external view of the quality of provision offered by the school and ensuring that all staff understand what a school must do currently to be judged outstanding in an inspection.
 - Safeguarding meets statutory requirements.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have the highest expectations for students in the school. They understand the strengths of the school very well and have a clear understanding of where improvements should be made. They know how to use information about student achievement to judge how well the school is doing and how good teaching is. There is evidence that they hold the school leaders rigorously to account. They visit the school regularly to develop a secure first-hand knowledge of the educational experience offered to the students. They are committed to strong governance, review the impact of their work and undertake training to improve their effectiveness. They have a wide range of skills and expertise to bring to their roles and are currently undertaking a skills audit to check where additional strengths would be useful. They ensure the financial integrity of the school and monitor the use of additional funding, for example the pupil premium and the Year 7 catch-up funding, to ensure that this is having the required impact. They are supportive of the rigorous approach to performance management taken by school leaders and understand broadly how this relates to salary progression.
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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	100750
Local authority	Lewisham
Inspection number	413320

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Girls
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	900
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	300
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Cdre Jonathan Cooke
Headteacher	Sue Roberts
Executive Headteacher	David Sheppard
Date of previous school inspection	6 March 2007
Telephone number	020 8690 3710
Email address	admin@hillyfieldscollege.lewisham.sch.uk

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