

Prendergast Vale College

Elmira Street, Lewisham, SE13 7BN

Inspection dates 18–19 September 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires Improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils achieve well. They are making better and faster progress than they were at the time of the previous inspection. Progress is also much more consistent across the college.
- Pupils make good progress because they are well taught. Regular checks on the quality of teaching make sure that pupils are learning well.
- The youngest children in the Nursery and Reception classes are given a good start to their education.
- Pupils who need extra help are supported well and are making good progress. Any gaps in attainment between different groups are closing.
- Attendance and punctuality are improving and attendance is above average across the college.
- The college is an orderly place where pupils feel safe. They enjoy college and most of them behave well in lessons, in the playground and around the building.
- The enrichment programme gives pupils very many opportunities to develop their own interests and learn new skills. It helps to raise their aspirations for what they can achieve.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted very well.
- Leaders and the governing body have high ambitions for the college. They know what the college is doing well and where improvements need to be made.
- Staff take part in high-quality training and professional development which helps them improve their knowledge and skills.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Teaching is not yet outstanding.
- A few pupils are less well motivated and sometimes lapse into low-level misbehaviour.
- Pupils' written work and their handwriting are often untidy.
- The marking of pupils' written work does not consistently give them enough guidance on how to improve.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed significant parts of 36 lessons in all year groups, with five being observed jointly with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- The inspection team held meetings with members of the governing body, the executive headteacher, the local authority, a wide range of staff and groups of pupils.
- Inspectors observed the college’s work, attended assemblies, scrutinised pupils’ work and reviewed progress data, evaluation and development documents, safeguarding information, behaviour and attendance records and the governing body minutes.
- Inspectors took note of 21 responses to Ofsted’s online questionnaire (Parent View), 51 responses to the Parents Questionnaire and three emails from parents, as well as questionnaires completed by 33 staff.

Inspection team

Grace Marriott Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Michael Elson	Additional Inspector
Noureddin Khassai	Additional Inspector
Brian Netto	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Prendergast Vale College is one of three schools in the Leathersellers' Federation of Schools. It opened in September 2011 when pupils and staff from Lewisham Bridge School transferred to it on the closure of that school. The college is designated as an all-through school for three to 16 year olds. Pupils transfer to another federation school for their sixth form studies. The school currently has pupils from age three (Nursery) to 15 (Year 10).
- The primary phase is similar in size to most primary schools with one class in each year group, though currently there are two classes in Year 1. The secondary phase takes four forms of entry and is smaller in size than most secondary schools.
- The college started in temporary accommodation on two sites but since September 2012 has been on its current site. The former primary school was refurbished and extensive new facilities were added.
- The headteacher works closely with the executive headteacher who has oversight of the three schools in the federation. The executive headteacher has been in post for a year.
- The college shares a governing body with the other two schools in the federation.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium (additional government funding for specific groups, including those known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority) is above average as is the proportion who are from minority ethnic backgrounds and who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is well above average.
- The college meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The college does not use any alternative provision.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching from good to outstanding by ensuring that:
 - marking consistently gives pupils constructive advice on how to improve their written work and the time to respond to the advice
 - teachers implement strategies which will motivate and engage those few pupils who are less focused on learning and eliminate the occasional low-level misbehaviour
 - teachers raise their expectations for the quality of handwriting and the presentation of pupils' work.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher's vision for the college is shared by the leadership team and fully supported by staff and governors. They all have very high aspirations for their pupils and focus relentlessly on the drive to improve pupils' learning and their experience of college.
- The college improvement plan is based on rigorous and realistic evaluation of success so far and is sharply focused on making sure that all pupils achieve to the best of their ability. The college is targeting additional funding effectively to close the gap between different groups of pupils.
- Senior and middle leaders and managers are determined to improve achievement by developing more consistently outstanding teaching. They are working hard to support teachers so that all pupils, including the minority who are more reluctant learners, are motivated to want to succeed.
- Teachers understand that they are held accountable for pupils' progress and performance targets are linked to achievement. They take part in a high-quality and systematic programme of professional development that is improving their knowledge and skills.
- Teaching staff at all levels understand and make good use of data. The college has thorough systems to check pupils' progress in order to identify where pupils could be doing better and take appropriate action.
- The curriculum is well matched to pupils' needs. The college is planning the implementation of the new National Curriculum and assessment carefully. In both primary- and secondary-age classes, the work in subjects such as science, geography and history is being used well to develop key skills in English and mathematics.
- The curriculum provides very well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The wide range of enrichment activities, often initiated by pupils themselves, as well as the sports activities, help to build pupils' confidence as well as promoting their social development. Pupils are strongly encouraged to have an active lifestyle. The school makes effective use of the primary school sports funding.
- The college uses the diversity of backgrounds and experience of its pupils to help them understand what it means to live in modern Britain. Lessons, tutor time and assemblies are all used to promote tolerance and pupils' understanding of why concepts such as equality and the rule of law are so important.
- The college has worked hard to involve parents and carers in their children's education and parents and carers appreciate what the college offers their children and are supportive of it. Most think that their children are well taught and would recommend the college to others. A small number would like to be better informed about their children's progress and a few have concerns over the standards of behaviour.
- The college works closely with the local authority which provides an appropriate level of support.
- The governance of the college:
 - Governors fully share the vision of the college leadership and the federation as a whole and are determined to see that the college becomes an outstanding college. Their knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the college is impressive and enables them to provide an excellent level of support and challenge. Their comprehensive grasp of data enables them to monitor achievement and in particular understand the performance of different groups of pupils. This means that they can make sensible decisions about the use of the additional funding for specific groups and the primary school sports funding and can monitor the impact of the spending. They ensure that procedures for safeguarding children meet legal requirements and also that the college is meeting other statutory requirements, for example through their monitoring of the quality of teaching and pupils' performance and their oversight of financial management. Governors support senior leaders in implementing strong performance management. They know how targets are set for teachers as part of this and how this links to pay and progression up the salary scale.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour is good. The college has high expectations for behaviour and clear systems for managing it which pupils understand and which staff use consistently. Pupils show that they are proud of their school by the way in which they respond positively.
- From the time when they first start college, whether this is in the Nursery, Reception class or Year 7, pupils are encouraged to listen to others and understand why it is important to respect each other's beliefs. They relate well to each other and adults and relationships at all levels are good. Pupils cooperate well with each other in discussions and other activities.

- The college's work to keep pupils safe is good. Pupils feel safe and do not express any particular concerns about bullying. They know how to stay safe and younger as well as older pupils could explain about different types of bullying, including cyber bullying and how to avoid putting themselves at risk when using the internet. Older pupils commented that any low-level disruption is not allowed to affect their learning.
- Staff consistently follow college procedures to manage behaviour and tackle discrimination and the positive impact of this is seen in the drop in the number of exclusions. Most parents and carers who responded to the online questionnaire, both on paper and through the online Parent View questionnaire, think that behaviour is good and that the college deals successfully with any bullying. The staff response to the Ofsted questionnaire was similarly positive.
- Pupils are willing to take responsibility and be involved in college life. They could identify areas where their views had had an impact, such as in the changes to college meals, but older pupils in particular felt that they could be involved more and were keen to take on more responsibility.
- Behaviour and safety are not yet outstanding because some pupils are still too dependent on responding to adults' expectations rather than taking full responsibility for their own behaviour and attitudes.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is typically good and some is outstanding. Teachers have good specialist knowledge for whatever level or phase they are working in and use this effectively to plan work which will engage pupils and help them to learn.
- Teachers make sure that the work builds systematically on what pupils have already achieved and during lessons they question pupils carefully to check understanding. They provide good oral feedback so that the pupils have the confidence to move quickly on to the next steps.
- Pupils' written work is marked regularly and many pupils clearly use the constructive feedback to help them improve their work. However, this is not consistent enough across the college to help pupils to do even better. Teachers do not always encourage pupils to take sufficient pride in the appearance of their written work and accept poor handwriting and untidy work.
- Teachers make sure that work in different subjects helps pupils to use and improve their literacy and numeracy skills. For example in a lively and challenging session in Year 6, pupils were using their comprehension skills very effectively to evaluate eyewitness accounts of the destruction of Pompeii, in preparation for writing their own accounts. Teachers used technology skillfully to set the scene for them so that they fully understood what was required of them.
- Teachers have high expectations for behaviour and attitudes as well as academic work. They use teaching approaches which are appropriate, challenge pupils to think, and at the same time expect pupils to show respect for other people's beliefs and opinions. Most pupils respond well to the expectations and have very positive attitudes. A few pupils respond less well and teachers, particularly some new to the college, sometimes have to spend time managing low-level misbehaviour so that it does not affect the learning of others.
- In a number of subjects such as art, modern languages, music, physical education and science, secondary teachers also work in the primary phase so that pupils benefit from high-quality specialist teaching and access to specialist facilities in these areas. In Year 1, pupils were thoroughly enjoying a lesson in which they were learning how to introduce themselves and greet each other in Spanish.
- Class and subject teachers, together with senior leaders, check pupils' progress regularly. If pupils are at risk of falling behind others, teachers and support staff work closely together to provide individually planned support to help them to catch up. As a result, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are able to take part fully in lessons and make good progress, as do pupils eligible for support from additional funding and those with English as an additional language.

The achievement of pupils is good

- The majority of children start the Nursery and Reception classes with knowledge and skills which are typically somewhat below the expectations for their age. Good teaching and an increasingly good partnership with parents and carers mean that the children make good progress. By the end of Reception, the number of children achieving a good level of development is in line with national figures, though few exceed this.
- In Years 1 and 2 the good progress continues and in 2014 almost all pupils achieved the expected

standards in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportion achieving the higher levels in writing was lower than in reading and mathematics, and developing writing skills is currently a major focus in these year groups. The impact of this is starting to be seen in the quality and quantity of pupils' writing.

- The weaknesses identified in Key Stage 2 in the previous inspection report have largely been eliminated and there is now little difference in the progress of different year groups. Though there is still a legacy of underachievement for some pupils, many have caught up and results in Year 6 tests are now much closer to the national average.
- The good progress in Year 7 identified in the previous report has been maintained. College records, pupils' books and test data show at least good achievement in most subjects and the majority of the current Year 10 pupils are on track to achieve five or more good GCSE grades in Year 11. The college is not intending to use early entry for GCSE examinations.
- Higher-ability pupils and those who are gifted or talented are given work that challenges them. Discussion with Year 10 pupils studying history showed that the higher attainers were able to present sophisticated arguments on their chosen topic. These showed a good level of research and understanding of issues as well as the ability to write cogently and with maturity.
- There is little difference in the progress made between groups of pupils. Those eligible for support through additional funding are also making better progress and their standard of work is now broadly in line with that of other groups. In 2013 their attainment in the Year 6 tests in reading, writing and mathematics was at or above that of other pupils. In 2014 the gap was less than a term.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are well supported both in class and through specific intervention work tailored to their needs. They make progress at a comparable rate to other pupils and in general do better than similar pupils nationally. Pupils from minority ethnic groups and those for whom English is an additional language also make good progress.

The early years provision

is good

- The Nursery and Reception classes provide a safe, vibrant and welcoming environment for the youngest children in which learning is interesting and fun. The children learn to become independent and play well together, learning to share, take turns and use equipment sensibly and safely.
- Good preparation with parents, carers and children before the children start, for example through 'Stay and Play' sessions, helps them to know what to expect and helps the staff to get to know the children and their particular needs. As a result, even though at the time of the inspection some children had been in school for only a few days, they had settled happily into the routines and were obviously enjoying exploring the range of activities and equipment available to them.
- The teaching is typically good. In both classes, children develop good personal and social skills so that they are curious about the world and ready to learn. Staff also place great emphasis on the basics of reading, writing and mathematics. They provide many interesting things to do which encourage children to read, write and talk about what they are learning.
- From their first days in school, children take reading books home which helps to develop their enjoyment of reading. They make good progress in phonics, learning how letters and sounds can be blended to make words and then sentences.
- Achievement in reading and mathematics is close to the expectations for children of this age but writing is less good, so staff are encouraging children to 'write' from an early stage. The work of the current Year 1 pupils when they were in Reception showed that almost all children had made good progress. The most able were retelling favourite stories, writing at some length in sentences and with phonetically plausible spelling, for example, 'becos' for 'because'.
- In the Reception class, staff had identified the need for boys to do more mathematical activities and had encouraged a group of boys to create a mathematics game. They were now playing this enthusiastically and it was helping to build their skills and confidence in handling numbers.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led and managed. Leaders are successfully tackling areas for improvement. Staff have taken on the challenge of the new curriculum and work together well as a team to ensure that all areas are covered thoroughly and that children are able to make faster progress.
- Parents and carers are encouraged to play an active part in their children's education. Staff record children's progress systematically, making excellent use of technology to keep parents and carers informed. This not only creates detailed school records, it gives parents and carers secure access to updates on progress and also enables them to upload relevant evidence of what children do at home which is helpful to staff.

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	135843
Local authority	Lewisham
Inspection number	448945

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

Type of school	All-through
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	3–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	646
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Christopher Barrow
Headteacher	David Sheppard (executive headteacher) Paul O'Neill (headteacher)
Date of previous school inspection	22–23 November 2012
Telephone number	020 8297 3549
Fax number	020 8297 3549
Email address	s.halm@prendergastvale.com

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', 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 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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 and 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 123 4234, 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 information 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'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)
[Store St](#)
[Manchester](#)
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2014

