

# Prestwich Arts College

Heys Road, Prestwich, Manchester, M25 1JZ

## Inspection dates

14–15 October 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Since the last inspection, some subjects have not maintained the good rate of students' learning; consequently, some groups of students make slower progress than others in the college, particularly lower ability students in Key Stage 3 in science and humanities.
- Some teachers do not set high enough expectations when planning students' learning and they pay scant regard to the information on students' starting points and capabilities.
- Not all middle leaders are as effective as they should be in managing their departments to get the best out of students. Their evaluations of students' progress are honest and identify areas that need attention, but with little idea how to improve the position because some lack the skills and experience to do this.
- Some teachers are not clear in their understanding of what good achievement is. Consequently, they do not plan their lessons well enough to challenge the range of student abilities.
- Disadvantaged students' progress across the college is uneven. They do as well as their classmates in mathematics, but not as well as those in English.
- Marking of students' work by teachers is variable in quality across subjects. It does not always help students move their learning on.

### The school has the following strengths

- Leaders, managers and governors have been very successful in reducing the exceptionally high rates of exclusions seen at the last inspection. Students and staff speak of a clear vision and direction set by the headteacher and his team that makes for a harmonious college environment with improving learning and high expectations. Attendance is above average.
- The leadership of mathematics is strong; consequently, teaching is good and all groups of students achieve well from their starting points.
- Students behave well in lessons and around the college. There is a tangible sense of community, integration and belonging.
- Students with disabilities and special educational needs receive good quality support that enables them to progress at a good rate. Vulnerable students are equally well supported in a caring nurturing environment that helps them get the best out of their college experience.
- A proportion of teaching is of high quality. As a result, students learn quickly and make good progress. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength, as is students' understanding of personal safety awareness.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors saw 29 teaching sessions or parts of sessions delivered by 23 teachers. Observations of two further extended sessions were carried out jointly with members of the senior leadership team. A total of 43 lessons were seen overall.
- Inspectors looked at samples of students' work across a range of subjects and year groups. Records of their progress, the standards they had reached and records of behaviour and attendance were also taken into account.
- Students were spoken to in class and around the college and more formally in meetings.
- Inspectors took account of the 27 parent responses on Ofsted's on-line questionnaire (Parent View), and analysed the parent questionnaires produced by the college. Inspectors also took into account 56 questionnaires completed by staff expressing their views about the college.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the Chair of the Governing Body, senior and middle leaders, including representatives from the local authority, the head of the English as an additional language service and the improvement consultant.
- The inspection team also analysed a range of college documents relating to college leaders' evaluation of the college's work, their plans for the future how they work to keep students safe and how leaders and managers are working to improve teaching and students' progress

## Inspection team

Peter Cox, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Sophie Gillies

Additional Inspector

Janet Peckett

Additional Inspector

Andrew Henderson

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Prestwich Arts College is a smaller than average sized secondary school.
- The proportions of students who are disadvantaged and therefore eligible for the pupil premium is higher than average. (The pupil premium funding is additional funding for those pupils eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.)
- Most students are representative of minority ethnic groups and a much larger proportion than seen nationally speak English as an additional language.
- A broadly average proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs are supported at school action. The proportion supported by school action plus or with a statement of educational needs is broadly average also.
- The college meets the government's floor standards, which are the minimum levels expected for students' attainment and progress.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that more of it is at least good, to drive students' learning at a faster rate and so raise achievement, by:
  - teachers planning lessons more effectively so that all students are stretched and exceed what is merely expected of them, particularly students who start college with above average ability
  - ensuring that the best teaching quality evident in the college is shared more widely amongst teachers
  - improving the effectiveness of teachers' marking of students' work, ensuring that it helps inform students what to do next, helping drive achievement further.
- Strengthen the skills of some subject leaders by:
  - ensuring that all subject leaders have a relentless focus on and responsibility for planning for good progress for each student, regardless of ability.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- Since the last inspection, the current headteacher and his team have implemented systems and processes that are beginning to have the desired impact of sustained improvement. While English attainment has dipped slightly from last year, mathematics has improved. Rates of progress overall are steadily increasing in English and mathematics, although not enough is done to secure consistently good progress in some other subjects such as history and science.
- The management of teaching and learning is good. The college knows its staff well and has secure plans in place to ensure that teaching quality becomes good soon. Processes are very clear and thorough, with a range of evidence collected, including data on students' achievement for particular classes and work scrutiny. Senior leaders are accurate in their assessments of teaching strengths and areas to develop. Training to improve the quality of teaching is comprehensive within a limited budget. Attendance at these events is monitored and much of what is done created in house.
- Student progress data are collected regularly and meetings between the headteacher and heads of subject follow up on issues that arise. Not all teachers focus well enough on progress that is better than that merely expected of students. Consequently, not enough good progress is yet made. Data are thoroughly analysed by the leadership team and appropriate challenging targets are beginning to be set.
- Middle leadership has some strengths. The mathematics department is functioning well, as seen in their results, and English is strengthening, but there is more to do to ensure consistently good quality teaching that leads to better learning and higher standards.
- Leaders monitor the impact of the pupil premium funding and have succeeded in closing the performance gap between these students and their peers in mathematics and increasingly in English.
- Information and advice is given to students as they journey from Key Stage 3 into 4 and in preparation for life after college through assemblies, careers evenings and one-to-one support. Students' awareness of the available opportunities and the qualifications required to succeed on these routes is good, enabling all students to take up places at college or in work.
- Safeguarding procedures meet requirements and the policies to protect students from harm are well established and initiated very swiftly, should the need arise. Student welfare and their protection from harm are paramount. 'The Fold' is well resourced and successful in providing a safe haven for those students who are vulnerable. Students benefit from the care given and say they return to classes feeling better equipped to learn.
- Students' social moral, spiritual and cultural development and understanding is good. In lessons and registration time, they have opportunities to discuss current affairs and moral issues such as the current tensions in the Middle East. Much is made of appointing students with responsibilities in sport and as prefects and mentors to others.
- The arrangements to manage staff performance are good. They are rigorous and clearly focused on the college's priorities. The Governing Body supports the headteacher in this process very well. They see the importance of rewarding success and yet are not shy in holding back pay rewards if teachers' performance is less than expected, which in turn leads to focused training and support.
- Parents show a high regard for the college and its leadership and management. The majority of parents who responded via Parent View would recommend Prestwich Arts College to others.
- College reports for parents show progress across subjects, but the commentary too often cites good progress being made for some students, whereas it is clear from the data contained in the report that some students - generally of a higher ability - are merely making expected gains in their learning. Some subject areas like English are better at detailing what skills and knowledge are needed to be gained so that standards will rise.
- The local authority provides some light-touch consultative college improvement support. The college buys in effective language support for those students who need it. As a result, those students do well.
- The curriculum is good. The length of the teaching day is currently shorter than usual. A review is being undertaken with the likely outcome to bring the day in line with other schools. The curriculum provides good coverage of the National Curriculum with some distinctive features such as the arts, which are particularly broad. Two languages are offered at Key Stage 3 and good option choices in Years 10 and 11 help strengthen students' personal development and support their improving achievement.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body provides good support to leaders. The long-standing highly effective chair, through the good sub-committee structures, keeps a close eye on securing value for money, including the use of the pupil premium grant and its impact on eligible students. Meeting minutes evidence a rigorous

approach to staff being recommended (or not) for pay progression. Governors are well informed about students' achievement through the information they receive about students' progress over time. Governors have a clear understanding of the quality of teaching because the processes used by leaders are rigorous and informative.

## **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of students is good.
- Students' attitude to learning and the attention they give to their teachers in lessons is good. They try hard in lessons and arrive well equipped and ready to learn, although on occasion starts to lessons can be jittery because of the distance some have to travel from opposite sides of the campus.
- Movement around the college is safe and orderly and students' relationships between each other and their teachers are good. Students talk enthusiastically about their college and the harmonious and welcoming ethos that is evident. They appreciate diversity and talk convincingly of not tolerating inequality or discrimination. One student quoted T. J. Klune, 'it's not where you come from, it's about who you are'.
- All forms of bullying are known, but not tolerated. On the rare occasions when it happens, students speak of adults dealing with situations quickly and successfully.
- Student attendance has improved and is now above average. The number of students that are persistently absent has reduced also. A major improvement has been the significant reduction in exclusions, both fixed-term and permanent, from an astonishingly high number in previous years to rates that compare very favourably with national figures. These reductions have been established through the efforts of all, but driven by the headteacher by issuing proportionate punishments to students, but keeping them in college so their learning is not impeded.

### **Safety**

- The college's work to keep students safe and secure is good.
- Rich curriculum provision allows students to develop a clear understanding of potentially dangerous situations and what they should do in that situation. Students are made aware of sensitive social, moral and cultural issues and understand the health and safety consequences. Students understand the benefits of living in modern Britain and as young people, understand their responsibilities and rights which are exercised, at a local level, through the college council and its activities and the system of appointing prefects.

## **The quality of teaching** requires improvement

- Teaching is not good because too much is inconsistent in quality and so students' learning over time is not as fast as it should be. There are some examples of high quality teaching in subjects such as mathematics and media studies.
- Teaching does not always enthuse or interest students, because often teachers are planning learning that doesn't take into account well enough students' ability as seen in student progress data. Teachers tend to give students activities that are designed to meet the middle ground, and by doing so do not always challenge the most able sufficiently well enough. Equally, the lower-ability students struggle to complete tasks because they are too hard. The exception to this is mathematics, where students achieve well over the time they are at college and teachers present sufficient challenge in lessons to ensure good levels of progress, including for those who are disadvantaged.
- Students have some opportunities to read in tutorial time, but wider opportunities, for older students particularly, are limited. Some examples of writing at length and using mathematics across a variety of subjects were seen.
- Disadvantaged students are taught well, although more ground needs to be made up in English. Those students with special educational needs are well supported in and out of class. They are not held back because other adults supporting them are effective.
- Targeted support for those students who speak English as an additional language ensures that progress of this group of students is in line with expectations.

- When students are engaged and enthused in their learning, they do well. For example in a media studies class, students had scripted, acted and directed a 'teaser' to promote a documentary on e-safety and cyber-bullying and its impact on young people. In one example seen, the students had edited their clip well enough to create tension and suspense that Alfred Hitchcock would have been proud of!
- The quality of marking is inconsistent across subjects and sometimes within subjects. English is particularly strong on this, where teachers' comments help direct students to improve further. Some marking is of poor quality, is sometimes difficult to read and does not help students' progress.

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because it is not yet consistently good across all subjects and year groups. Progress is variable across year groups particularly in Years 7, 8 and 9 because teaching does not sufficiently challenge all students, especially the most able.
- In 2014, the number of students leaving with five good GCSEs, including English and mathematics, slipped down on the previous year. Students make good progress in mathematics because of the good teaching and relentless focus on higher expectations. English is less successful because teaching quality is not as strong.
- Disadvantaged students in mathematics perform as well as others in the college. In English, they are gaining ground on their non-disadvantaged peers. Overall, disadvantaged students perform less well than other students nationally, but better year on year in school. There is no difference in mathematics, but disadvantaged students perform less well than others in English by approximately half a GCSE grade.
- The work seen in a wide range of students' books showed that progress is in line with expectations, given students' age and starting point on joining the college. Too few make good progress over time, although mathematics is an exception to this across most year groups and students make good progress.
- Students are taught in groups according to ability. Those of a higher ability do not do as well as expected and the proportion leaving Year 11 with the higher grades of A and A\* is below average.
- Teaching assistants who help and guide the learning of those students who speak English as an additional language provide effective support. Other assistants are sometimes less effective in teaching those they are working with and are more of an administrative help to the teachers in class.
- Some students were entered for a GCSE mathematics examination during their last year in college and improved their overall grades in the summer term.
- Support funded by the Year 7 catch-up funding to improve literacy skills is good and enables students having difficulty in reading to improve, particularly those who speak English as an additional language. Other students who have weaker literacy skills are helped to improve, because teachers and other adults provide well-targeted support.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	105362
<b>Local authority</b>	Bury
<b>Inspection number</b>	448895

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	828
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Ray Austin
<b>Headteacher</b>	Christopher Hornby
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	24 November 2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 773 2052
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