

Philip Morant School and College

Rembrandt Way, Colchester, CO3 4QS

Inspection dates 24–25 March 2015

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
Sixth form provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The determined and decisive leadership of the Principal, senior leaders and governors, and their uncompromising insistence on high standards, has galvanised other leaders. This has resulted in rapid improvements in many aspects of the academy's work.
- The overwhelming majority of students are keen to learn and work hard. A 'zero tolerance' approach to behaviour has helped to minimise disruption to learning. Inappropriate behaviour is rare.
- Leaders have ensured that the academy is a safe environment in which students can work and learn. The academy's determined anti-bullying culture and its ethos of 'kindness' have created a harmonious community characterised by mutual respect.
- Over time, teaching enables most students to make at least good progress in most subjects. The quality of teaching has improved because of the Principal's decisive and robust actions to support and challenge teachers.
- Students' attainment is rising. Gaps between the progress and attainment of disadvantaged students and others are narrowing.
- The wide variety of courses in the sixth form enables students to study subjects that are a good match for their interests and abilities. Most make at least good progress and attainment is rising.
- Students benefit from high quality careers advice and guidance which helps prepare them well for work or further study.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The proportion of students who make expected, or above expected progress in mathematics and science is similar to, but not higher than, that of students nationally.
- Some teachers do not use their information about students' achievement to plan activities, or adapt them during the lesson to reflect students' understanding, so that all groups make rapid progress.
- When activities are not engaging, a very small minority of students lose focus and do not work with the same determination shown by the majority.
- Some students, including in the sixth form, do not act on the feedback that they get from teachers about their work, so continue to make the same mistakes.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 54 lessons or parts of lessons, and during tutor periods and assemblies. Inspectors observed several lessons jointly with senior leaders. They examined evidence of learning over time in a large number of students' books and files.
- Inspectors observed behaviour during lessons, break periods, and as students arrived in the morning and moved around the academy site.
- Inspectors analysed academy documentation, including that relating to: attendance, exclusions, safeguarding, behaviour, systems for improving teaching and learning, records of the academy's self-evaluation and improvement planning, and details of its use of additional funding to support disadvantaged students.
- Inspectors took account of the 158 responses to the online, 'Parent View' survey in addition to the views of individual parents, together with the academy's own survey results of parental opinion and the 60 responses to the staff survey.
- Inspectors held discussions with the Principal and Executive Principal, other senior and subject leaders, teaching staff, members of the governing body and groups of students.

Inspection team

Jason Howard, Lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Anthony Sharpe	Her Majesty's Inspector
Helen Loughran	Additional Inspector
Paul Lawrence	Seconded Inspector
Susan Cox	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The academy is a larger than average secondary school with a sixth form.
- The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is well below the national average, as is the proportion who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of students who are disadvantaged and supported by the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for students who are known to be eligible for free school meals or who are looked after by the local authority, is below the national average.
- The proportion of students who are disabled or who have special educational needs is below the national average.
- The local authority funds specially resourced provision for disabled students and those who have special educational needs. This provides support for 16 hearing impaired students. The students are taught in mainstream classes, supported by specialist staff.
- The academy uses the alternative provision at Colchester Institute.
- The Principal is supported in her work by the Executive Principal, who is also Principal of Colne Community School and College and a national leader of education.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- A large number of teachers have left the academy since the end of the last academic year.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to raise attainment in mathematics, science and other subjects, including in the sixth form, by ensuring that all teachers:
 - use their information about students' progress to plan engaging activities that enable all groups to make rapid progress, and adapt these activities as necessary during the lesson to reflect how well students have understood the points they are learning
 - ensure students always act on the feedback they receive to improve their work and avoid making the same errors in future
 - encourage all students to work with the same drive and ambition displayed by the majority.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The Principal has driven forward rapid change in order to improve standards, in keeping with the academy's ambition that all students should be as successful as possible. Her insistence that the academy's work should be underpinned by the core values of 'aspiration, success and kindness' has helped to embed ambition, improve standards of behaviour and increase the impact of teaching on students' progress. There is a clear commitment to equality of opportunity for all students.
- The Principal, together with the Executive Principal, governors and senior leaders, share this vision and are working effectively as a team to make it a reality. Their checks on standards are regular, rigorous and robust; teachers and subject leaders are held accountable and expectations are high. Difficult decisions have been taken where necessary. A large number of teachers have left the academy since the previous inspection.
- Subject leaders monitor carefully the progress that different students are making, including in the sixth form. They regularly discuss with senior leaders the impact of the additional help given to those who need it and make changes as required. This is helping to close gaps in many students' knowledge and understanding that are the legacy of weaker teaching in the past.
- Senior leaders are helping subject leaders to check standards within their areas of responsibility. Thorough 'reviews' of a number of individual subject areas have ensured that middle leaders are held accountable for the quality of the work of their teams, and has helped them determine plans for improvement. Subject leaders appreciate the support from senior leaders in making the necessary changes.
- Teachers are unreservedly positive about the high quality training and support that they receive, both from their individual mentors and through the academy's collaboration with colleagues at Colne Community School. The academy's monitoring records indicate that this training helps teachers to develop their skills and meet their challenging targets. The quality of teaching has continued to improve rapidly in most subjects as a result. Recent additional training for those who teach and support disabled students and those who have special educational needs has been particularly effective.
- The academy's curriculum is broad and balanced. At Key Stage 4, students have access to a wide variety of different courses, including dance, drama, media studies, health and social care and many options within design and technology. All students complete a GCSE qualification in religious studies, which enables them to debate ethical issues and gain an insight into, and a respect for, those with different beliefs. Sixth form students can choose from a large number of academic and vocational courses. Planning is well advanced so that, from September 2015, sixth form students will be able to study additional A level options at the University of Essex.
- The academy's ethos helps students develop values that enable them to appreciate the diverse nature of life in modern Britain. Lessons in citizenship give students an understanding of Britain's democracy, and the ability to consider key issues such as immigration, radicalisation and human rights. This helps tackle discrimination, promotes students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well and encourages good relations throughout the academy.
- Leaders target their use of pupil premium funding effectively. Small group teaching, one-to-one tuition and other forms of assistance help those who need additional support in particular subjects to catch up or complete work that is more challenging. Disadvantaged students are making progress that is at least as rapid as their peers across a wide range of subjects as a result.
- Leaders monitor the attendance, behaviour and progress of the small number of students who attend alternative provision very carefully.

- Students benefit from good quality careers education, which starts from the point at which they join the academy. This helps them to gain an understanding of the different career options open to them, and the qualifications and skills they will need to achieve their ambitions. The annual 'options fayre', and individual guidance interviews, help students make GCSE course choices that are appropriate given their interests, abilities and ambitions. Independent careers advice, together with visits to careers fairs, give students information about the wide range of post-16 courses available and the institutions that offer them. This enables them to make informed choices. Very few students are not in education, employment or training after leaving the academy in Year 11 and none who leave at the end of their sixth form courses.
- The academy benefits from working in partnership with Colne Community School and College. Teachers and leaders are able to learn from each other through joint training activities. Subject leaders across the two schools work to ensure the accuracy of the grades applied to students' work.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body's appointment of the Principal and Executive Principal has been fundamental in securing the continued improvement in standards at the academy. Changes to the way governors work following a review of governance have sharpened their strategic focus. Governors have a secure and detailed understanding of the quality of teaching, and of the progress being made by different groups of students, because they receive regular updates from senior leaders. This information is used to reward teachers who help students to make exceptional progress. Governors know how results compare with those of other schools and ask challenging questions and take steps to ensure the accuracy of all the information they receive, including that showing students' performance. They take robust and decisive action where underperformance is identified.
 - Governors' arrangements for the safeguarding of students meet statutory requirements and are effective.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They are courteous, helpful and well presented. Students are almost unflinchingly punctual at the start of the day, and arrive at their lessons on time and ready to learn. They treat the academy site, and each other, with respect.
- The academy's recently-introduced 'zero tolerance' policy has helped to dramatically reduce the incidence of behaviour that disrupts learning; any such behaviour is dealt with rapidly, effectively and consistently on the rare occasions when it does occur. Most students have good relationships with their teachers and typically respond quickly to their guidance and instructions.
- Staff work effectively to help those who have difficulty in managing their behaviour so that, whenever possible, they continue to learn within the classroom without disrupting others. However, a very small minority of students do not always concentrate in lessons or work with the same determination as that shown by the majority.
- Although the academy's leaders have made increased use of temporary exclusion as a sanction to reinforce expectations about behaviour, its incidence has reduced dramatically over time as these high expectations have become established.
- The academy's monitoring information indicates that students who attend off-site provision attend and behave well and are kept safe.

Safety

- The academy's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. The academy site is completely secure; leaders take all possible steps to ensure that it is a safe environment in which to work and learn, including through regular and appropriate staff training. Many members of staff are trained in first aid. Staff complete thorough risk assessments before students go on trips or visits.
- Leaders and governors are trained in 'safer recruitment' techniques and leaders establish the suitability of

those who work at, volunteer within or visit the academy. Teachers and other staff receive regular safeguarding training, including about risks such as forced marriage. They know what to do if concerns about any student arise, and follow procedures correctly.

- The curriculum helps students to understand how to minimise risks and stay safe and healthy. Lessons, assemblies and talks from visiting speakers help students to gain a good understanding of how to use the internet and social networking sites safely and appropriately.
- Significant and sustained work by leaders to raise awareness of, and combat, bullying means students understand the different forms that it can take and how to report it. Trained student 'bullying ambassadors' reinforce this during assemblies, and have led a high-profile campaign against homophobic bullying. Students, including those in the sixth form, indicate that bullying, including homophobic or racist bullying, is rare and robustly responded to by the academy. This is supported by the academy's detailed monitoring information. The use of unacceptable language is rare, and students confirm that the use of homophobic language is virtually unknown. None was heard during this inspection.
- The academy's leaders follow up any lateness or absence quickly and effectively. Attendance is above the national average and rising. Rates of persistent absence are declining and are now below the national average.

The quality of teaching is good

- In the majority of subjects, good teaching is enabling most groups of students to make at least good, often better, and sometimes exceptional, progress. Teachers' subject knowledge is strong; most teachers convey an infectious enthusiasm that encourages students to want to learn. During a Key Stage 3 history lesson, for example, the teacher's lively approach helped students gain a secure understanding of why children were evacuated during the Second World War.
- Teachers usually encourage students to aim high and to keep trying if they find things difficult. When offered a choice of tasks, many try hard to complete those that are more challenging. During a Key Stage 3 geography lesson, for example, this led to students using information perceptively to decide upon the most important consequences of global warming.
- Most teachers use their information about students' prior achievement to plan interesting activities that help all groups of students to make progress. Effective teaching has had a very positive impact on the rates of progress and the achievement of students in English, including those who are disadvantaged.
- Teachers often show students what a successful piece of work should include before asking them to attempt it. During a Key Stage 3 design and technology lesson, the teachers showed examples of high quality work to students, which encouraged them to continue to refine their individual projects.
- Most teachers make it clear to students what they need to do next in order to improve, and how the work they are doing will help. The majority of students respond positively to this, and believe they can achieve their ambitious targets even if their progress is initially uneven. Many are able to assess their own work and explain precisely and accurately what they need to do to improve it. Most students act upon the feedback they receive and make the necessary changes.
- Teachers use questioning to check how much students have remembered, and how securely they have grasped new concepts or methods of working. They often change activities, the pace of learning or the content of their explanations if students do not initially understand. Many teachers use questioning to encourage students to develop their ideas and deepen their thinking further. During a Key Stage 4 English lesson, for example, the teacher's subtle questioning helped students to consider hidden meanings within the poems they were studying.
- The academy provides good help for students who join the academy with low levels of literacy and this has a significant impact on their achievement. Students' reading and writing skills are developed well within different subject areas. This helps them understand what they need to do to answer particular

exam questions effectively, and to communicate their responses appropriately, including when writing at length. Students' writing skills and their presentation and punctuation of their written work show good progress over time. Students' numeracy skills are developed well across a range of subjects.

- Where teaching is less effective, teachers do not use the information they have about students' achievement to plan engaging activities that enable all groups to make rapid progress. Sometimes, teachers do not change activities during lessons when students need to go over something again, or are ready to move forward more quickly than anticipated. A small minority of students do not consistently act on the feedback they get about their work. This means that they continue to make the same mistakes.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Students join the academy with broadly average levels of attainment; the proportion who obtain at least five A* to C grades including English and mathematics at GCSE is above the national average. This represents good progress. A high proportion of students make above expected progress in English and achieve A* to B grades at GCSE. Students generally make good, rather than outstanding, progress in mathematics and science.
- In 2014, disadvantaged students made similar progress in English to others within the academy; a higher proportion made good or better progress than was the case for other students nationally. Disadvantaged students were almost as likely to gain an A* to C grade in English as other students nationally. The gap between disadvantaged students' attainment and that of others at the academy was half a grade; the gap between their attainment and that of others nationally was negligible.
- In mathematics, disadvantaged students' rates of progress were below that of others in the academy and nationally. The gap between disadvantaged students' attainment and that of others at the academy, and nationally, was about a grade. The academy's monitoring information indicates that the gap between the progress made by these students and by others is closing rapidly. This was supported by scrutiny of students' work during the inspection.
- The majority of disabled students and those who have special educational needs make at least good progress from their individual starting points because of the high quality support they receive. The help that students who have hearing impairments receive from staff within lessons is particularly effective.
- The most-able students make very good progress and attain well; in 2014 this was especially the case in English, mathematics and the humanities. The academy's monitoring information, together with scrutiny of students' work, indicates that the most-able students are currently making strong progress across most key subjects.
- The academy no longer automatically enters students early for GCSE examinations. It now does so only when it is clear that this is in the best interests of particular individuals and that it will not restrict the grades they can attain.
- The academy's monitoring information indicates that the small number of students who attend alternative provision make good progress from their individual starting points.
- 'Catch-up' funding to support those who have not achieved at least a Level 4 in the Key Stage 2 national tests has been used effectively. It has been particularly effective in improving students' literacy.

The sixth form provision

is good

- Leadership of the sixth form is good. Students can choose from a wide range of academic and vocational qualifications that meet their individual interests and abilities. The head of sixth form and other leaders monitor standards carefully and intervene quickly if these are not high enough. They provide effective support and challenge to teachers. The quality of teaching has improved over time as a result, as have students' progress and attainment.

- Sixth form students are safe and secure, and say that they enjoy being members of a diverse and tolerant community. They are confident in their understanding of issues relating to internet safety, including how to minimise risks when using social networking sites. Students' attendance is high, and their conduct is good. Leaders are developing additional opportunities for members of the sixth form to make a positive contribution to the academy community.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is strong; most use a variety of techniques to develop students' understanding and skills successfully, including skilful questioning. Students appreciate the positive relationships they have with their teachers and the individual guidance they receive. Very often, feedback on students' work is precise and detailed; during a psychology lesson, for example, this helped all students to gain a very clear understanding of how to improve answers to examination questions. Feedback is particularly strong in history, psychology, sociology, law and health and social care. Scrutiny of students' work indicates that most students act on the advice they are given and make the necessary changes to improve their work.
- Some teachers do not always plan activities that enable all groups of students to make rapid progress. This is because some students receive work that is too difficult whilst, for others, the work is insufficiently challenging. Some students do not demonstrate sufficient determination to maximise their learning during lessons, and this is not always challenged by their teachers. Very occasionally, feedback is not precise or timely enough so students continue to make the same mistakes.
- Students enter the sixth form with starting points that are typically below average. Most go on to make progress that is broadly in line with the national rates for almost all subjects. Students make strong progress in many vocational subjects. Overall, students' achievement is close to the national average. Gaps between the progress and achievement of disadvantaged students and others are narrow and closing.
- The academy's monitoring information indicates that the progress of current students is accelerating, and that the improvement seen in examination outcomes in 2014 is likely to be sustained. This reflects continuing improvements in the quality of teaching over time. Those who are re-taking GCSE mathematics or English are well provided for and pass rates are improving.
- Students receive high quality support and guidance when preparing applications for employment or university. Disadvantaged students are as likely to succeed in their applications as their peers. All sixth form students who left in 2014 gained employment or entry to university.

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	Essex
Inspection number	442090

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1643
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	234
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lorna Kean
Principal	Catherine Hutley
Date of previous school inspection	24-25 April 2013
Telephone number	01206 545 222
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