

Prestwich Arts College

Heys Road, Prestwich, Manchester M25 1JZ

Inspection dates

18–19 October 2016

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders' actions to improve the quality of teaching have not had enough impact. Pupils' rates of progress are too slow in some subjects.
- Information that leaders collect on pupils' learning is not used to accurately identify the key areas that need improvement.
- Leaders do not check the impact of their actions thoroughly enough. Consequently, they do not have an accurate view of the school's performance.
- Teaching is not challenging enough for the most able pupils to achieve well in some subjects. Leaders' expectations of what some pupils can achieve are not consistently high enough. The school's feedback policy is not always used to good effect.
- Pupils are sometimes disengaged from learning. This leads to off-task behaviours that sometimes disrupt the learning of others. The curriculum does not meet the needs of a small but significant group of the least able pupils.
- Outcomes are not high enough for pupils who are disadvantaged, particularly in English.
- Governors do not hold the school to account rigorously enough about the impact of leaders' actions and spending of the pupil premium funding.
- Pupil premium funding is not being spent effectively on targeted actions to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.

The school has the following strengths

- Achievement in mathematics is above average, particularly for the most able pupils and those with average starting points.
- Achievement is strong in media, dance and drama.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress at the school.
- There is some excellent teaching in art, textiles and mathematics.
- Pupils' speaking skills are good; pupils read widely and often and can write at length about their work.
- The school is a harmonious and tolerant community.
- Pupils feel very safe at the school. The school takes its responsibilities for safeguarding extremely seriously.
- Achievement overall has improved since 2015.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and learning by:
 - ensuring that lessons are more engaging so that all pupils enjoy their learning, remain on task, and make fast progress
 - planning learning that takes account of the pupils' starting points so that expectations are high but realistic
 - ensuring challenge for the most able pupils so that more of them reach the highest standards
 - using the school's marking policy consistently to move pupils' learning on.
- Improve standards at the school by:
 - checking the impact of development planning and leaders' actions and using this information to plan for further improvement
 - ensuring that staff have the skills and understanding to analyse data and use the information to inform planning
 - addressing the lack of suitable curriculum provision for the small group of less able pupils
 - focusing on improving the outcomes for groups of pupils, particularly the disadvantaged, and targeting pupil premium funding effectively
 - ensuring that governors hold the school to account more effectively, particularly about the outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and the use of pupil premium funding.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Monitoring and evaluation of the impact of development planning are insufficiently developed throughout the school. Often the impact of an action is recorded as a list of what has been done rather than how effective it has been. This means that the school's self-evaluation is not precise as leaders are not clear which strategies are effective. Consequently, leaders do not focus their planning on the most appropriate key priorities for improvement.
- Leaders monitor the progress of pupils but do not sufficiently analyse the data and information to find out how different groups perform. The planning of support for these groups is not always effective as the impact on raising standards is not taken into account.
- Actions to improve the quality of teaching since the last inspection have not had sufficient impact in some subjects. Pupils are sometimes held back by a lack of challenge.
- Leaders' expectations of pupils are not consistently high enough. The progress of disadvantaged pupils is not tracked and analysed with sufficient rigour. This means that the school and governors are not aware of how well these pupils are performing in different subjects and therefore do not set high enough targets for improvement. In addition, the reporting system to parents at key stage 3 suggests that expected achievement is at too low a level.
- Expectations of behaviour are not always high enough. Low-level off-task behaviour is not challenged consistently.
- Senior leaders have recognised that the curriculum that is now in place for all pupils in Year 10 does not currently meet the needs of the least able pupils. They are taking action to address this issue.
- Plans for the introduction of changes to grades at GCSE are not yet fully implemented in English and mathematics. Pupils are not clear what grades they should achieve in the new GCSEs and so target-setting for pupils is not effective.
- At key stage 3, plans for the changes to the curriculum for English are underdeveloped.
- The headteacher has a strong vision for the ethos and values of the school based on nurturing pupils of all backgrounds. This pervades the whole school community. His zero-tolerance approach to bullying and racism has a significant impact on the school culture of tolerance and respect. The school is a harmonious community.
- The accountability of middle leaders has increased since the last inspection and many of these leaders have the skills to contribute well to the improvements necessary in the school.
- Following the dip in results in 2015, the school has made significant curricular changes such as increasing the allocation of time to English and expecting all pupils to study subjects that contribute to the English Baccalaureate. The impact of these actions is not yet expressed in improved outcomes.

- Catch-up funding is spent effectively to support pupils who join the school with low attainment in Year 7.
- The school prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain. Careers education, information and guidance are particularly strong for pupils and the families of international new arrivals to the school. This helps these pupils assimilate into British society quickly and so their outcomes at the school are largely good.
- The staff are motivated and support the headteacher in his drive to improve the school.
- The school has made substantial changes to the sharing of good practice in teaching. Teachers value the increased opportunities they now have to learn from each other. The impact of this can be seen in the improvement in headline results in 2016.
- The school makes use of alternative provision at Bury College. The school regularly monitors the attendance, behaviour and progress of any pupils it places there and the courses are appropriate.
- The local authority has not challenged the school sufficiently about the analysis of pupils' performance and the impact of the school's strategies for improvement. The local authority has brokered effective support for the English department, which has led to improvements in teaching and progress.

Governance of the school

- Governors do not hold the school leaders to account rigorously enough to bring about substantial improvement. They have not challenged weaknesses in leaders' monitoring and evaluation of plans and are not fully aware of the key priorities of the school due to weaknesses in self-evaluation. The data that they receive is not sufficient to fully inform their decision making.
- Governors are unaware of the performance of the disadvantaged pupils at the school. The pupil premium funding has been spread too widely across general initiatives which are not measured for impact and have not all been focused on meeting disadvantaged pupils' needs.
- Governors have taken difficult financial decisions regarding the reduction in funding for the school. They supported the headteacher well through the process of redundancies. The vast majority of staff are positive about the leadership of the school and recognise the sensitivity with which this complex situation was handled.
- The governors carry out the headteacher's performance management regularly. They effectively review the performance management process of all staff and have challenged the headteacher's judgements on occasion. They have undertaken appropriate training with regard to safeguarding.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school is a very safe place for pupils, staff and visitors. It takes its responsibility for safeguarding very seriously.
- All policies are in place and are used effectively to report incidents and ensure that

they are followed up assiduously.

- All staff are trained in a full range of safeguarding matters, including those who arrive mid-year. The local authority designated officer recently delivered training to help staff keep themselves safe online and to understand their safeguarding duties. All staff reported that this training was helpful.
- All risks are appropriately assessed and managed.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teachers' expectations of pupils are sometimes too low. Where this is the case, there is not enough challenge in tasks and activities provided for pupils. As a result, pupils do not make good enough progress in some subjects. A significant minority of parents responding to Ofsted's Parent View survey had concerns about the rate of progress made by pupils at the school.
- Teachers' feedback to pupils in books is not consistently in line with the school's policy. A few parents expressed concern about the marking of books. Some pupils do not find their teachers' feedback helpful overall, whereas others value and act upon it.
- Teaching does not always cater for the needs of groups of pupils, particularly the most- and least able. There is insufficient inspiration or excitement for some pupils. Around half of the small minority of pupils who responded to Ofsted's survey said that they did not enjoy learning. Frequently, all pupils in a class are expected to complete the same tasks regardless of their starting points. As a result, teaching does not always meet the needs of different groups of pupils and this hinders their progress over time. These factors lead to disengagement by a significant minority of pupils and to some minor disruption. Occasionally, the behaviour of pupils disrupts the learning of others.
- Little homework was seen in books during the inspection. The suitability of homework was a concern among the small minority of parents who responded on Ofsted's Parent View survey. The school's own analysis in October 2015 indicated that boys, disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities did not always complete their homework. Although the school has put some measures in place to ensure that homework is now completed, these have yet to be evaluated.
- Effective learning was seen in a range of subjects. Assessment, at its best, is innovative. For example, the use of recordings of a teacher's comments for pupils to listen to and create their own areas for improvement enables pupils to begin the work quickly and achieve well.
- Across the school there are good examples of pupils' literacy levels being improved. An activity to check the spelling of key vocabulary, for example, led to pupils using these words to write their own learning objectives and plan their own learning successfully. Extended writing is a feature across many subjects, with examples of complex vocabulary and sentence structure being used routinely.
- Pupils read confidently and are developing a love of reading through many strategies such as form-period reading. Specific support programmes are leading to rapid improvements in pupils' reading.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Pupils are not fully aware of what is expected to be a successful learner and this is not promoted by teachers often or well enough. There are few examples of teachers sharing what success will look like for pupils. Some books are untidy and contain graffiti. A small minority of pupils who responded to Ofsted's survey said that they do not generally enjoy learning nor find lessons challenging. This results in negative attitudes to learning at times. Other pupils are much more positive about their experiences of school.
- The wider curriculum at the school provides well for the needs of the pupils. Careers guidance ensures that pupils have the correct knowledge and understanding about the impact of their option choices. Equally, many pupils at key stage 4 are well supported in making choices about post-16 pathways. The impact is seen in the very low number of pupils who are not in education, employment or training post-16. Improvement has taken place over the last three years.
- The school has been awarded the gold standard for Inspiring Information, Advice and Guidance and has won an award for promoting healthy eating.
- A thorough personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education programme, which incorporates citizenship GCSE at key stage 4, ensures that pupils understand the differences between groups of people, what British values mean and the dangers of radicalisation.
- Teachers and other adults are quick to tackle the use of derogatory language, and the acceptance of difference in the school is widespread.
- Pupils have access to a wide range of extra-curricular activities and overseas visits. All year groups can take part in a performing arts and media trip to New York to broaden pupils' horizons.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Low-level disruption prevents some lessons from flowing smoothly, slowing progress. A minority of parents and pupils who responded to Ofsted's survey expressed concerns over occasional misbehaviour.
- The school's data on attendance is not sufficiently robust or well enough understood for the impact of the school's actions to be seen clearly. Attendance is broadly in line with the national average for secondary schools. However, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils is lower than that of other groups. Leaders have taken action to reduce persistent absence, including the appointment of a school-based education welfare officer.
- Pupils are not always punctual to lessons and many do not have the correct equipment. This has a negative impact on their learning.

- Pupils' conduct around the school between lessons and at lunchtime is generally good but there are certain parts of the building where instances of silly or boisterous behaviour are seen and foul language is sometimes heard.
- The school is rigorous in following up persistent absence and works with many agencies to trace every pupil. As a result of this, the rate of persistent absenteeism has fallen.
- The Fold, a resource for pupils with a wide range of barriers to learning, and a space where multi-agency work can take place, contributes to effective provision for the most vulnerable pupils.
- Pupils are very polite and are comfortable speaking with adults.
- The numbers of fixed-term exclusions have fallen in the last few years as a result of the school's work to encourage pupils' reflection on their behaviour. The number of more serious behavioural incidents has reduced significantly.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- The proportions of pupils attaining good qualifications were low in 2014 and 2015 but improved significantly in 2016. However, most-able pupils and those who are disadvantaged do less well than others.
- In some subjects, pupils are insecure in their knowledge. For example, some Year 10 pupils are not able to confidently explain the conditions required for photosynthesis even though this is a key stage 3 topic. On other occasions, pupils build effectively on their prior knowledge and this is effectively assessed. For example, in history, pupils were able to recall the key facts about Henry VIII before moving on to the next period in history where this knowledge is used.
- Leaders collect information about outcomes on a regular basis but they do not comprehensively analyse the performance of different groups of pupils. Leaders only compare the achievement of disadvantaged pupils with that of other pupils in the school, not others nationally. This builds in low aspirations for this group of pupils. The school does not have a focus on the detail of this and other groups' outcomes so there is a lack of information with which to plan support and strategies to improve standards.
- Low outcomes in English in previous years have been reversed. Attainment in English is now approaching the national average despite pupils' starting points being well below average, particularly in reading. However, middle-attaining pupils and those who are disadvantaged do not make as good progress as others in English. The most able disadvantaged pupils make significantly less progress in English than they should.
- The rates of progress that current pupils make show variations between subjects and year groups. Pupils' progress slows when tasks are unchallenging and pupils' individual needs are not often catered for.
- Separate sciences, French, citizenship, health and social care, dance, music, art, food technology, drama, media and textiles are subjects in which performance is good at GCSE grade C and above. Not all subject areas are successful at delivering A and A* grades for the most able. There is underperformance in product design, and business studies. This reflects the variation in the quality of teaching and the lack of challenge

for the most able pupils.

- Outcomes in mathematics are very strong. Pupils with average starting points and the most able reach exceptionally high standards. Disadvantaged pupils from all starting points also make fast progress.
- More pupils achieved passes in the English Baccalaureate suite of qualifications in 2016 compared with 2015, bringing attainment close to the 2015 national average.
- The school's prediction of results has become more accurate as a result of support provided by Bury local authority, Hawkley Hall High School and Bury Grammar School.
- Progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is good, including those who are disadvantaged. Outcomes for pupils who speak English as an additional language are generally good due to the excellent level of support given by the school. A gender gap that existed between boys and girls in 2015 was closed in 2016.
- Those pupils who have received support through the Year 7 catch-up funding are able to read fluently at age-appropriate levels.

School details

Unique reference number	105362
Local authority	Bury
Inspection number	10019796

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

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	855
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ray Austin
Headteacher	Christopher Hornby
Telephone number	0161 773 2052
Website	www.prestwich.bury.sch.uk
Email address	Prestwich@bury.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	14–15 October 2014

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements for the publication of specified information on its website.
- This school is smaller than average, with a high percentage of disadvantaged pupils and a high percentage of pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The school population has a higher mobility of pupils than the national average.
- The school had to make several redundancies during last term.
- The school uses Bury College to provide education for a very small number of pupils.
- The school receives support from Hawkley Hall High School and Bury Grammar School as well as being part of the Bury Secondary Learning Collaborative.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed a wide range of teaching and learning sessions and undertook learning walks around the school.
- A scrutiny of pupils' work was carried out.
- Discussions were held with pupils in groups as well as informal conversations at lunchtime and breaks.
- Information from Ofsted surveys of staff and pupils was analysed. There were 42 responses from pupils and 30 responses from staff.
- There were 46 responses from parents on Parent View that were taken into account in the inspection, including the free-text responses from 12 parents.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, middle leaders, the school improvement partner, representing the local authority, and with governors.
- A telephone interview was carried out with a representative from the alternative provision used by the school.

Inspection team

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Helen Gaunt	Ofsted Inspector

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