

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
[www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)



31 May 2017

Mr Sean Bullen  
Headteacher  
Millfield Science and Performing Arts College  
Belvedere Road  
Thornton-Cleveleys  
Lancashire  
FY5 5DG

Dear Mr Bullen

### **Short inspection of Millfield Science and Performing Arts College**

Following my visit to the school on 17 May 2017 with Erica Sharman, Ofsted Inspector, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in October 2012.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

You provide a strong vision and have developed a sense of teamwork among staff and pupils. The school's mottos, 'team Millfield' and 'creating bright futures' are reflected in the work of the school. Your ongoing focus on raising aspirations has ensured that pupils' outcomes have continued to improve. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education. In recognition of your work to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils, the school was accredited with the national pupil premium award in 2014.

Since the previous inspection, you have been made executive principal of Montgomery High School and you share your time between both schools. This means that there have been significant changes to the senior leadership structure of Millfield Science and Performing Arts College, including the former deputy headteacher working alongside you as associate headteacher. This new way of working has created opportunities to develop leadership skills within the school. Leaders know that they are accountable for standards in their areas and are committed to seeing that these continue to improve. The very large majority of staff who responded to the online survey are proud to work in the school. Staff morale is high.

Pupils are polite, courteous and welcoming to visitors. Pupils behave well in lessons,

at breaktimes and around the school. Relationships between staff and pupils are positive. As one pupil commented: 'Teachers go the extra mile for you.' Pupils informed inspectors that they value the benefits of the vertical tutoring system that you have introduced. They say that it helps them to get to know others and raises aspirations for younger pupils. Pupils benefit from a range of extra-curricular activities such as inter-house competitions, trips abroad and sports clubs.

Parents' views of the school are very positive. The overwhelming majority of those completing Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, would recommend the school to others. One parent commented: 'My children are supported in their learning and are encouraged to reach their full potential.' You have been successful in engaging parents and building relationships with the local community. Your school is now the school of first choice for an increasing number of local parents and, consequently, it is now oversubscribed.

Governors are very committed and ambitious for the school. They have a wide range of skills and expertise. Governors have not allowed the school to rest on its laurels since the previous inspection report. They have a detailed understanding of what the data on pupils' performance tells them about how well the school is doing. Governors provide effective support and challenge to leaders. For example, they ensure that leaders are held to account for the effective use of the pupil premium funding.

In the previous inspection report, you were asked to ensure that higher-ability students are extended in all lessons through in-depth questioning and demanding activities. In most lessons, teachers use questioning effectively to target pupils of different abilities and to probe and deepen pupils' understanding. However, you have rightly identified that challenging the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, remains a continuing focus for you.

You were also asked to integrate the teaching of literacy and numeracy into subjects across the curriculum to enable all pupils to extend their skills in these areas. Pupils are now presented with many opportunities to develop and extend their writing skills. The Year 7 catch-up funding is being used well to help pupils develop their literacy and numeracy skills more quickly.

In 2016, the progress made by pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, was strong in English, mathematics and science. However, pupils did not achieve as well in languages and humanities. Disadvantaged pupils also made slower progress than other pupils nationally in languages and humanities. You and your leaders have acted quickly to address these weaknesses and there is already evidence of improvement. The difference between the progress of disadvantaged pupils and others nationally is diminishing.

You recognised that absence and persistent absence for disadvantaged pupils and those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities have been higher than those of their peers in the past. Leaders have taken steps to rectify this and there are positive signs that the attendance of these pupils is now improving.

## **Safeguarding is effective.**

Leaders have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Records are detailed and of high quality. Pupils' safety is given high priority and staff are vigilant. Recruitment procedures follow the latest statutory guidance.

Staff are appropriately trained and have a clear understanding of what to do if they have concerns about the safety of any pupil in their care. The governing body checks all safeguarding arrangements.

Pupils say that they feel safe and well looked after in school. They report that bullying is rare and that staff act quickly to resolve any issues. They have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe when using the internet. Parents who completed Ofsted's questionnaire, Parent View, were very positive about the school's work to keep their children safe.

## **Inspection findings**

- Pupils make good progress overall. In 2016, progress was well above average in English and above average in mathematics and in science.
- You regularly evaluate the curriculum and make changes when necessary. For example, more time has been allocated to languages in option subjects in key stage 4. The percentage of pupils taking the academic routes expected in the English baccalaureate (EBacc) is increasing. You are also in the process of introducing new vocational subjects in key stage 3 and 4. As a consequence, the curriculum is well matched to the aspirations and interests of pupils, and they are increasingly successful as a result.
- You have successfully developed teachers' planning and questioning skills. Teachers' good subject knowledge enables them to explain ideas and concepts to pupils clearly and generate enthusiasm during lessons. However, not all teachers provide pupils with enough challenge. As a result, not all pupils, especially the most able, deepen their understanding and knowledge as quickly as they should.
- You recognised that pupils did not make good enough progress in languages and humanities in 2016. You have increased the level of accountability for leaders and they are taking effective action to improve the quality of teaching in these subjects. Inspection evidence shows that the progress of pupils in these subjects is now improving. History and technology subjects remain a concern for you and your leaders are working with staff in these subjects to secure better outcomes for current pupils.
- In 2016, disadvantaged pupils did less well in languages and humanities. Leaders mentioned that this was partly because most of the spending from the pupil premium funding was assigned to help them catch up with their peers in English, mathematics and science. You have now focused spending across a wider range of subjects. Staff provide extra teaching sessions and 'wow' intervention days are assigned to languages and humanities to help these pupils catch up in these subjects. The 'foundation action plan group' comprising pupil premium champions

from the English and mathematics departments and middle leaders is also enabling good practice to be shared.

- Pupils enjoy coming to school and this is shown by their above-average attendance. However, absence and persistent absence for disadvantaged pupils and those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities have been higher than those of other pupils in the past. Staff vigorously follow up pupil absences with parents and carers. The impact of this is that the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities has risen alongside a reduction in their persistent absenteeism. However, you recognise that the attendance for some of these pupils needs to improve further.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities improves further
- the quality of teaching in history and technology subjects is consistently strong so that pupils make good progress in these subjects
- there is a continued focus on providing sufficient challenge for the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, to reach the highest standards of which they are capable.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Lancashire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Ahmed Marikar  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During this short inspection we met with you, senior leaders, a group of middle leaders and a group of teachers. I met with three members of the governing body including the chair of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. Accompanied by senior leaders, we visited a number of lessons to observe learning and scrutinise pupils' books. We met with a group of pupils and spoke to others in lessons and around the school.

We took account of 32 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents including 23 free-text comments. We also considered the views of 60 staff and 30 pupils through Ofsted's online questionnaires.

We looked at a range of documentation including the school's self-evaluation and information about pupils' attainment and progress. We also evaluated safeguarding procedures, including policies to keep children safe; records of training; safeguarding checks and attendance and behaviour information. I also undertook a review of the school's website.