

Pulse and Water College

3rd Floor Block O, 18–36 Wellington Street, Woolwich, Greenwich SE18 6PF

Inspection dates

3–5 October 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- School leaders have not ensured that pupils make as much progress as they should during their time at the school.
- Pupils' outcomes require improvement. The school's work to improve pupils' speaking, reading and writing skills has not been effective. Continuing weaknesses in teaching hinder pupils' progress across subjects.
- Leaders have not ensured that pupils' starting points are measured promptly and that their progress is monitored effectively.
- Teachers do not have the assessment information they need to set pupils suitably challenging work. Teachers do not select resources and set tasks that build well on pupils' prior learning.
- Leaders have not secured good-quality teaching. Teachers do not make sure that pupils understand the work.

The school has the following strengths

- The proprietor has ensured that all of the independent school standards are met.
- Pupils are well cared for. There are strong professional relationships between staff and pupils. This has a positive impact on pupils' personal development.
- Leaders have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and conduct. Pupils respond well and their behaviour is good. Pupils listen and concentrate well in class. They have positive attitudes to learning.
- Pupils' attendance and punctuality are good. They enjoy coming to school.
- The broad curriculum is a strength of the school. Pupils in key stage 4 appreciate the wide choice of GCSEs that enable them to continue courses that they have begun in their previous schools.
- Pupils' aspirations for their future lives are supported effectively through a comprehensive careers and employability programme.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that leaders and managers assess pupils' starting points promptly and monitor pupils' progress effectively so that pupils reach their potential at school.
- Improve teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that teachers:
 - use information about pupils' starting points to choose resources and design tasks that enable pupils to build on their prior learning and meet the challenge of GCSE courses
 - check that all pupils understand the work teachers set.
- Improve outcomes in all subjects by ensuring that pupils improve their speaking, reading and writing skills.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- School leaders have not ensured that teaching, learning and assessment and pupils' outcomes are consistently good.
- School leaders do not measure pupils' starting points promptly when they join the school or monitor their progress carefully. Leaders have not ensured that teachers use assessment information to plan suitably demanding activities. Consequently, teachers do not adapt work to meet pupils' needs and pupils sometimes find the work they are given too hard.
- Teachers get regular feedback on the quality of their teaching. However, teachers are often unclear on what they need to do to improve their teaching skills in the classroom.
- Since the previous inspection, school leaders have ensured that all the independent school standards are met.
- The headteacher has developed a culture of respect for all, combined with academic learning. This ethos has a positive impact on pupils' personal development and fosters pupils' aspirations for their futures.
- The curriculum is a strength of the school. In key stage 3, pupils study a broad academic curriculum, which includes all the required subjects and prepares pupils well for GCSE courses. In key stage 4, pupils can continue to study the courses that they began in their mainstream school. In addition, at the start of Year 10, pupils can select other subjects which interest them. School leaders are fully committed to ensuring that pupils can study subjects of their choice.
- School leaders set high expectations for pupils' behaviour in classes and in social time. Teachers uphold these expectations and pupils respond positively. Leaders ensure that pupils have meaningful behaviour targets. Pupils are involved in setting their targets and are motivated to work towards gaining rewards and privileges. Leaders monitor pupils' behaviour with sensitivity and skill. As a result, pupils' behaviour is consistently good.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. Pupils have a range of opportunities through the curriculum to study art and music, consider ethics and learn about other cultures and religions. Pupils have a good understanding of fundamental British values.

Governance

- The school does not have governors and the proprietor takes on the governance role. Since the previous inspection, the proprietor has appointed two heads of school to increase the school's leadership capacity. The proprietor has implemented a system for evaluating teachers' performance and staff receive regular feedback on their teaching. However, leaders have not ensured that professional development helps teachers to improve teaching quality further. The proprietor has a clear vision of 'respect for all' and high academic standards for the school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school's safeguarding policy meets requirements and is published on the school's website.
- Safeguarding records are detailed and of high quality. Leaders have developed a strong culture of safeguarding. They have ensured that staff are well trained and understand their responsibilities. Leaders and staff ensure that any concerns about a pupil's welfare are identified and reported promptly. Leaders seek advice from external agencies to ensure that pupils access support and help when they need it.
- School leaders have developed effective partnerships with organisations such as the police to support pupils who may be at risk of gang involvement or knife crime. School leaders work effectively with parents and carers to keep pupils safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teachers do not typically use information about pupils' starting points to choose appropriate resources and design activities that provide the support and challenge pupils need to succeed.
- The variable quality of teaching means pupils often struggle with tasks that are too hard. This prevents pupils from making good gains in their knowledge and skills in a range of subjects. Teaching gives insufficient emphasis to the development of pupils' reading, writing and communication skills. Pupils often struggle to express or record their ideas accurately because teachers do not provide clear examples so pupils know how to be successful.
- Teachers do not routinely check all pupils' understanding. Some pupils are not given opportunities to develop their speaking skills and teachers do not know if all pupils have understood the work.
- Teachers set target grades for pupils which are suitably challenging. However, pupils are not clear about what they have to do to achieve these goals.
- Teachers have strong subject knowledge and are enthusiastic about their subjects. They use specialist subject vocabulary in their explanations and discussions with pupils to show them how to use the language of the subject correctly. For example, in a science class about immunisation the teacher used many specialist terms about diseases and vaccinations. As a result, pupils were interested and involved in their learning.
- Teachers set high expectations for pupils' behaviour. Pupils respond positively and listen and concentrate well in class.
- Teachers provide strong support for individuals. For example, in a French class pupils were supported effectively to play a computer game to develop and extend their vocabulary in French.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils start the day with a 'well-being session'. Staff lead discussions with pupils on a range of topics including personal safety, such as how to stay safe on the internet and keeping safe in London. Pupils also reflect on current affairs topics and the impact these have on their lives. These sessions act as a welcoming and positive start to the day for pupils and have a positive impact on their personal development and self-confidence. They encourage pupils to develop their aspirations for the future.
- Pupils say that there is occasional bullying but that staff deal with it well. Pupils greatly value the strong culture of 'respect for all' which leaders have developed. New pupils quickly benefit from this positive ethos.
- The school's focus on good attendance and punctuality supports pupils in developing readiness for the world of work. The school's employability programme develops skills for employment and personal presentation, such as working as part of a team and interview skills. Pupils meet regularly with an external impartial careers adviser and find this helpful in developing their career goals.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils behave well in classrooms. School leaders set very high expectations of pupils' conduct in classes and this contributes to the positive learning environment. Pupils are clear that disruption of learning is not tolerated. Even when they find the work difficult to understand, their levels of self-discipline are such that they do not disturb the concentration of others.
- Pupils conduct themselves well around the school. They are respectful to each other and adults. They respond to instructions and contribute to the calm, purposeful atmosphere in school.
- Pupils know their behaviour targets and appreciate the range of privileges available through the reward system. They are motivated to meet teachers' expectations of their behaviour and enjoy the achievement celebration events.
- Pupils' attendance is good. Pupils with high levels of persistent absence in their previous school are supported effectively to improve their attendance.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils do not make the strong progress of which they are capable because the work they are set does not build well on their prior knowledge. Often, progress is limited because pupils do not understand the work or what they have to do to complete it successfully.
- Pupils' speaking skills are not developed routinely. Teachers do not ensure that pupils routinely have opportunities to answer in class and develop their speaking skills.

- Pupils' reading skills are not well developed. Leaders do not assess pupils' starting points in reading promptly when they are admitted to the school. Leaders' plans to implement a reading scheme and set targets for pupils to improve are at the early stages of implementation. They are not yet having an impact on improving pupils' reading skills and comprehension.
- Pupils' progress in writing is inconsistent. Pupils do not make strong progress because they are not well supported to overcome their difficulties. Where teachers use resources well, pupils make more progress. For example, in a history lesson pupils were provided with a useful writing frame which enabled them to organise complex ideas about the Treaty of Versailles. The most able writers make stronger progress and this has a positive impact on their GCSE outcomes.
- Pupils concentrate well, so their listening skills are highly developed. As a result, pupils' ability to memorise and recall information is successfully developed and this helps pupils to make progress across the range of GCSE subjects.
- Pupils' numeracy skills are developed effectively. Pupils are confident in their use of number and can apply this to their work in other subjects, such as science and the finance module in the personal, social, health and economic education course.
- Pupils who stay until the end of Year 11 achieve a range of GCSEs and other qualifications. Almost all pupils attain a qualification in English and mathematics.
- Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment. In 2017, Year 11 pupils progressed to apprenticeships, employment or continued their education at local colleges.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 141315 |
| DfE registration number | 203/6004 |
| Inspection number | 10035815 |

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

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| Type of school | Other independent school |
| School category | Independent school |
| Age range of pupils | 11 to 16 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 9 |
| Number of part-time pupils | 0 |
| Proprietor | Pulse and Water Learning Ltd |
| Headteacher | Temi Ladenika |
| Annual fees (day pupils) | £78.50 per day |
| Telephone number | 020 83172639 |
| Website | www.pulseandwater.co.uk |
| Email address | admin@pulseandwatercollege.co.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 17–19 June 2015 |

Information about this school

- Pulse and Water College is an independent school in the Royal Borough of Greenwich. The school caters for pupils who have been excluded from other schools or are at risk of being excluded.
- The school occupies part of the third floor of former university buildings in Woolwich. The premises have been adapted for educational use as a school.
- The headteacher is also the proprietor. The provision was first established in 2002 and became a registered independent school in September 2014.
- The school is registered for up to 25 pupils from the age of 11 to 16. There are currently seven full-time pupils on roll, some with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan.

- The school's last full standard inspection was in June 2015 when it was judged to be inadequate. The school had progress monitoring inspections in March 2016 and October 2016.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited classes in a range of subjects and in both key stages to observe pupils' learning. Some of these visits were made jointly with the headteacher.
- Pupils met with the inspector to talk about their views of the school. The inspector also considered the responses to the school's own pupil survey.
- The inspector looked at work in pupils' books across a range of subjects.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, heads of school and the administrator to discuss the impact of their work.
- The inspector scrutinised school documents, including the school's self-evaluation, curriculum plans, policies, records of pupils' behaviour and learning and safeguarding records.
- The inspector held a telephone conversation with the head of inclusion in Greenwich local authority.
- The inspector took account of the six responses to the Ofsted staff survey.
- The inspector considered the responses to the school's own parent survey. There were no responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View.

Inspection team

Janet Hallett, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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