

# Pendle Community High School & College

Oxford Road, Nelson, Lancashire BB9 8LF

## Inspection dates

24–25 October 2017

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Outstanding</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Outstanding</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Outstanding</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Outstanding</b>
16 to 19 study programmes	<b>Outstanding</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an outstanding school

- The headteacher is inspirational. She has the highest quality of education for pupils at the school as a constant aim and empowers her staff to provide it.
- Leaders have been highly successful in improving the quality of teaching and learning so that it is now outstanding.
- Senior leaders have developed more sophisticated systems for assessing and tracking the progress of all pupils that takes into account their wide range of needs and abilities.
- Governors are very ambitious for the school. They challenge leaders rigorously. As a result, they are highly effective in holding the headteacher to account for the quality of education that the school provides.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding. Excellent subject knowledge and carefully planned lessons that take pupils' needs into account contribute significantly to this.
- From a range of typically low starting points, pupils make outstanding progress. Teachers have high expectations of pupils. They are determined to see them succeed.
- Students in the 16 to 19 study programmes make rapid progress from their starting points. Typically, high proportions go onto education, employment or training.
- The school is a caring and welcoming place where pupils feel very safe and are happy. They very much enjoy their learning.
- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. Their conduct around school is excellent. Highly positive attitudes to learning contribute very well to the wonderful progress that pupils make. Adults manage behaviour exceptionally well, when required.
- Leaders write very detailed individual education plans for pupils. However, reviews of their targets do not consistently evaluate how successfully pupils have met those targets.

## **Full report**

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

- Make sure that pupils' individual education plans more consistently contain evaluations of how successful pupils have been in meeting their individual targets, in order to inform the setting of future targets.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Outstanding

- The headteacher fervently and successfully seeks excellence in the quality of education that pupils receive at Pendle Community High School and College. She inspires her staff to provide the very best for their pupils each day in every activity. As a result of her dedication to ensuring that they are all happy, safe and successful, pupils make outstanding progress in their all-round development.
- Leaders have taken highly effective action to secure substantial improvements in the quality of teaching and learning since the last inspection. Regular opportunities to meet to discuss excellent practice are now part of a typical week for staff. Senior leaders carry out sharply focused checks on the quality of teaching and manage staff performance very effectively. As a result, teaching and learning in the school are of very high quality.
- Leaders have been unrelenting in their aim to establish increasingly sophisticated assessment and tracking systems that give the clearest possible picture of pupils' progress. They have combined existing systems and research, such as published progression guidance documents and the Rochford Review, to establish an assessment process that is excellent in addressing the wide range of needs and aptitudes of pupils in the school. As a result, planning for learning is highly precise and results in outstanding progress for all groups of pupils across the curriculum.
- The school plays a leading role in the North West Schools Assessment Group, because of its pivotal work in developing assessment systems in schools. Senior leaders at Pendle Community High School and College include a high level of challenge in their own assessment procedures. Their work has contributed to a recent increase in expectations around assessment within the group. This demonstrates great ambition to influence the work of other schools through their own continuous improvement in this area.
- Leaders of all subjects and areas of responsibility, including English and mathematics, are fully conversant with standards in their subject. They constantly keep their subjects and areas under review and are highly ambitious to secure continuous improvement. For example, the school is in the process of applying for accreditation status from the National Autistic Society, demonstrating their commitment to understanding autism better and to improving their provision.
- The curriculum is very well designed and meets the needs of all pupils. Leaders have divided pupils into three groups that have increasing levels of need: independent learners, supported learners and experiential learners. The planning for the curriculum is skilfully adapted, and highly individualised to pupils in each of these groups through well-designed individual education plans. As a result, pupils' all-round development is very strong and their progress across the curriculum is outstanding. However, the review of pupils' targets in their individual education plans do not consistently evaluate how successful some pupils have been in meeting those targets, so as to inform the setting of future targets.
- Leaders promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well. They enhance the curriculum with opportunities for pupils to enjoy numerous

experiences, such as educational visits to France, adventurous activities with the school's own Scout troop and fundraising activities for the homeless. Consequently, pupils grow in confidence and develop a strong sense of moral purpose, and this fact contributes significantly to their outstanding progress and development.

- Leaders provide excellent opportunities for pupils to learn about fundamental British values. These include activities such as elections for school councillors, during which leaders adapted the voting process to meet the various communication needs of pupils. They also learn about other faiths through links with a local faith centre and lessons in religious education. The school keeps a photographic display of such activities, which leaders keep up to date as new activities happen.
- Senior leaders use all their additional funding highly effectively, including the pupil premium and that to support pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. They provide a wide variety of support, such as extra work in English and mathematics for pupils in the independent learners group, or a breakfast club to ensure that pupils start the day well-nourished and to encourage improved attendance. As a result, progress from starting points for all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, is rapid and strong.
- The headteacher and her leadership team devise thorough plans for improvement through regular analysis of the school's effectiveness. Leaders use different ways of gathering the information they need, such as analysing data and observations of lessons. They accurately identify areas to develop, which results in continuous improvement. However, leaders do not consistently include statements about how they will measure the success of their actions which focus on the impact of those actions on pupils' achievement.
- Staff are overwhelmingly supportive of the leadership team and very positive about the school. They appreciate the training that leaders provide to improve their practice, which relates both to their own targets for teaching performance and to the needs of the school's improvement plan. They have plenty of opportunities to request extra training to follow particular interests or needs they may have.
- Leaders have established strong links with the co-located mainstream high school and with the local primary special school. Older pupils make use of some facilities in the high school, such as the canteen and some sports facilities, which contributes well to the development of their self-confidence. There is also a highly effective programme of transition between the primary special school and Pendle Community High School. This programme includes regular visits by Year 6 pupils during their final term in primary school to experience life in secondary school.
- The local authority has a good understanding of the quality of education at the school. The adviser provides a level of support that is consistent with the school's obvious strengths. There are also effective working relationships between the school and those responsible for managing the provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities at the local authority.

## **Governance of the school**

- Governors know their school very well and they accurately consider the headteacher and her leadership team to be highly effective. They also have a very good

understanding of the excellent progress the school has made since the previous inspection.

- Governors have a wide range of expertise that contributes to the governing body's high level of effectiveness. These include experience in education, business and youth work. They have received appropriate training, including in safeguarding.
- Governors provide very effective challenge and support to the headteacher and her senior leaders. They are very ambitious for the school and do not hesitate to ask searching questions about standards and the effectiveness of the use of additional funding.
- Governors have a very clear overview of the processes for checking on the performance of staff, ensuring a robust and effective system.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Records are detailed and thorough. Leaders pursue issues with outside agencies in a timely manner, when required.
- The culture of safeguarding in the school is very strong. This centres on the depth of knowledge that staff have of their pupils and the safe and caring environment leaders create. Procedures are extremely efficient, from drop-off at the start of the day to departure at the end. This creates an atmosphere where pupils know they are very safe.
- As a result of the highly effective training they receive, staff know how to recognise signs of abuse and are well versed in the school's systems for reporting concerns. Leaders realise that communication is difficult for a significant proportion of their pupils, so they have developed a wide range of ways for them to communicate worries to adults. These include pictures and signing methods, like British sign language or Makaton.
- The school's records of checks on members of staff meet requirements and are thorough. The governor with responsibility for safeguarding carries out an audit of the record every term.
- Leaders carry out thorough risk assessments to ensure the safety of pupils. There is, for instance, a very detailed document that covers the potential hazards and appropriate control measures associated with the school's situation on a shared site with a mainstream high school.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

## **Outstanding**

- The key to the outstanding quality of teaching and learning in this school is the thoroughness and effectiveness of assessment and planning. As a result, teachers consistently deliver highly engaging lessons that are a close match to pupils' needs and abilities. Pupils sustain a high level of interest in their work, given their various needs and capabilities, and there is no loss of learning time.
- Staff use highly effective questioning techniques, which encourage pupils to try their best and to work solutions out for themselves as much as possible. Teachers and

teaching assistants alike adeptly vary their questions to match the needs of the pupil, in order to develop resilience and to challenge pupils to think independently. Questions range from those that, for instance, encourage a pupil with complex needs to move himself around on a tricycle to those that challenge a most-able pupil in Year 7 to explain how to convert a fraction into a decimal.

- Relationships between pupils and staff are excellent and contribute significantly to the productive lessons that pupils experience. Pupils show outstanding attitudes to their learning, which is a vital factor in the excellent progress that pupils from all groups make.
- Adults manage exceptionally well pupils who have behaviour issues that result from their disabilities. Leaders give excellent support in this, providing regular training for staff in techniques for reducing tension and, where necessary, safe handling. As a result, staff are calm and quietly authoritative on the few occasions when they need to intervene, resulting in typically excellent behaviour.
- Teachers challenge the most able pupils very effectively, giving them work that stretches them appropriately. For example, in Year 7, pupils learning geography have the opportunity to test their skills in map work by creating a map of their classroom, while in mathematics, they tackle complex calculations, such as long division of a four-digit number by a two-digit number.
- Pupils who require more support also do work that challenges them while recognising their lower starting points. For instance, in mathematics in the 16 to 19 provision, pupils grapple with appropriately challenging calculations. They show excellent resilience as they persevere to succeed in their tasks.
- Staff organise classrooms in ways that ensure that pupils receive the best support that matches their needs. For example, in classes where there are pupils with autism, teachers reduce distractions to a minimum. They use strategies, such as work booths, to support pupils' concentration and reduce anxiety.
- Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties, including medical conditions, develop very well and benefit from a superb level of care and support from adults. The school makes excellent use of its facilities, including a hydrotherapy pool, to provide pupils with the right degree of stimulation to match their needs. These pupils make excellent progress from their own starting points. Particular examples of success include beginning to learn independently to press a button to start a foot massage machine and taking simple messages around school without supervision.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

## Outstanding

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Leaders have made the school a warm and caring environment where all staff encourage pupils to thrive and become the most confident people they can be.
- Leaders have recently appointed a family liaison officer to encourage parents of more-vulnerable pupils to work more closely with the school. There is also a nurse in school, who provides invaluable support to staff to enable them to ensure the welfare of pupils

with complex medical conditions. These two roles contribute significantly to pupils' excellent personal development.

- Pupils who spoke with inspectors say that school 'is a great place to be'. They have many opportunities to make their voices heard through the school council, which also gives them excellent experience in taking positions of responsibility.
- Pupils benefit from a range of after-school activities that contribute strongly to their personal development. These include cookery and membership of the school's Scout troop.
- Pupils feel very safe in school and know whom to go to if they have concerns. They have a range of methods to communicate concerns, such as pictures and signing systems. They completely trust their teachers, whom they regard as a real strength of the school. At an appropriate level, they understand internet safety, because teachers provide them with the correct information.
- Leaders provide excellent opportunities for pupils to develop their independence. These include trips for older pupils to the local supermarket. Here they are given responsibility for buying supplies for the daily toast stall, for example. Teachers also use the visit to include other learning, such as visiting the meat aisle to discuss where meat comes from.
- Excellent careers guidance ensures that pupils are ready for the next stage of their education, training or employment. For example, leaders provide schemes of work that result in accreditation at entry level at the end of Year 11 in career choices. They also provide planned lessons in emotional health and well-being. Leaders devise transition plans for pupils to help them as they move beyond Year 11 and they teach appropriate social skills through activities such as organised tea parties.
- There are other methods by which leaders very effectively encourage independence and responsibility. They appoint prefects in Year 11, whose duties include supervising younger pupils as they enter the school hall for assemblies. They provide some Year 11 pupils with passes to allow them access through carefully selected secure doors. This allows them to move around the school independently to carry out tasks for their teachers. Leaders give older pupils special training, so they know when it is appropriate to offer help to those pupils who use wheelchairs.

## **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Leaders maintain detailed records of behaviour issues in a central electronic recording system. These also cross-refer to other important information, such as that connected with safeguarding and attendance. This level of detail contributes very well to leaders securing excellent behaviour from pupils.
- Adults model expected behaviour highly effectively. Consequently, pupils' conduct around school is exemplary and their behaviour in class enables them to progress exceptionally well, given their various needs and starting points.
- There are very few examples of bullying of any type in school. All staff promote a message of respect that lies at the heart of the school's ethos and values. Pupils clearly

demonstrate this in their relationships with each other and with members of staff.

- Attendance has improved and is now in line with the national average. Leaders have an effective range of strategies to encourage good attendance. These include a recently tightened control of the authorisation of holidays in term time and a greater focus on rewards for pupils who achieve full attendance.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Outstanding

- Pupils make outstanding progress across the school's three learning groups. In the 'independent' and 'supported' groups, they access the full range of national curriculum subjects, including English, mathematics, art, science and geography, which are carefully adapted to meet pupils' needs. In the 'experiential' group, pupils' learning is firmly based on their individual needs, such as profound or multiple learning difficulties. Leaders have redesigned this curriculum for this last group, using the Rochford Review as its basis. Almost all pupils across all three learning groups are working below the national curriculum expectations for all subjects.
- The school's own assessment data and evidence from observations during the inspection show that pupils develop exceptionally well from their starting points. As a result of sharply focused and individual planning, pupils make very strong progress in lessons and over time.
- Teachers have high expectations in designing the learning activities that pupils experience, which contributes substantially to pupils' excellent progress. For example, high-quality and challenging texts, such as Robert Louis Stevenson's 'Treasure Island', are used as a stimulus in all learning groups, wherever possible. For example, Year 7 and Year 8 pupils in the 'supported' group enjoyed developing an excellent understanding of the conventions of storytelling. In addition, they developed their communication skills well in a skilfully crafted session where they pretended to be pirates.
- There is a broad range of accreditation routes available to pupils up to the end of key stage 4. These include studying for a GCSE in mathematics, entry-level qualifications in mathematics and English, functional skills qualifications and awards in foundation and vocational studies. There is typically a high proportion of pupils who make the transition to the school's 16 to 19 provision.
- Teachers produce individual pupils' targets that are precise and challenging. They ensure that pupils make excellent progress from their various starting points, meeting their needs very effectively in the process.

## 16 to 19 study programmes

## Outstanding

- The leadership and management of the 16 to 19 study programmes are a strength of the school. Leaders have high expectations and focus very consistently on maximising students' progress.
- Teachers produce individual study programmes that provide consistent challenge to students. As a result, students make excellent progress in the qualifications afforded to them. There is a wide range of accreditation routes, including: personal progress

pathways in communication skills and mathematics; entry-level qualifications in personal and social development; qualifications in skills for independence and work and GCSE mathematics.

- All students benefit greatly from work experience, such as working in a local church. Leaders plan to extend the programme further. They also provide enterprise activities to develop skills that students can take into the world beyond school. For example, each tutor group takes part in a competition in which each has a budget of £50 and aims to make a profit. They use their technical and creative skills to excellent effect as they make Christmas decorations and gifts, which they sell on their stall at the community Christmas fair.
- Typically, high proportions of students go on to destinations that provide employment, education or training and there is high retention of learners on study programmes. In two of the past three years all students, for whom further education was appropriate, have moved on in this way. This represents outstanding progress from students' wide range of starting points.
- Teachers use their strong subject knowledge to ensure that activities in lessons are challenging and interesting. For example, in mathematics, students develop their number skills and record survey results in tally charts. Others grapple with calculations that stretch them and are based on practical everyday knowledge and skills, such as working out change from one pound. Students show increasing ability to work independently and make very good progress.
- Relationships between adults and students are very strong. Students in the sensory room, for example, make excellent progress in working on their individual targets. This is because teaching assistants support them very effectively, carefully recording students' responses at their different levels of engagement. These relationships contribute significantly to the outstanding behaviour and highly positive attitudes that students demonstrate.
- In conversation with inspectors, students said that they feel safe in the provision and that staff care for them well. They benefit from the strong safeguarding culture that is evident across the school.
- Leaders offer excellent careers advice and guidance, which are a key factor in the outstanding progress that students make. From the end of Year 11, the school provides a scheme of work that covers informed career choices and there is a connection with a careers and enterprise service. In the 16 to 19 provision there is a focus on personalised journeys to post-19 provision, where staff explore what students want to do and provide strong support in reaching their goal.

## School details

Unique reference number	135015
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10012590

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	115
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	46
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Trevor Ashton
Headteacher	Dr Christine Lingard
Telephone number	01282 682260
Website	<a href="http://www.pchs.lancs.sch.uk">www.pchs.lancs.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:head@pchs.lancs.sch.uk">head@pchs.lancs.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	19–20 March 2013

## Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The headteacher took up her position on a part-time basis in April 2016, working alongside the previous headteacher to aid transition. She became headteacher full time in September 2016.
- The school provides for pupils and students with an education, health and care plan or a statement of special educational needs. Pupils and students have profound and multiple learning difficulties, physical disabilities, severe learning difficulties and

moderate learning difficulties. A number of pupils have speech and communication needs, some of which are related to autism. Some have serious medical conditions and complex multiple needs.

- The proportion of students supported by the pupil premium is higher than the national average.
- Just over one third of students are from minority ethnic groups. Most of these do not have English as a first language.
- The school is co-located with Pendle Vale College and uses some of its facilities, such as the school canteen for pupils in key stage 4 and students in the 16 to 19 provision.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors carried out short visits to classes in key stages 3 and 4 and in the 16 to 19 provision, which were joint activities with the headteacher and an assistant headteacher. They also looked at samples of pupils' and students' work.
- Inspectors analysed a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation summary, action plans for school improvement, minutes of meetings of the governing body and records connected with the safeguarding of pupils. They also analysed the school's own assessment and tracking information.
- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, other members of staff, governors, pupils and representatives of the local authority.
- Inspectors also held discussions with a group of parents, a headteacher of a local primary special school and with post-19 providers.
- The lead inspector evaluated six responses received through Parent View, Ofsted's online survey and 34 responses to the staff questionnaire. There were no other survey responses.

## Inspection team

Mark Quinn, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Bernard Robinson

Ofsted Inspector

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