

# Philip Morant School and College

Rembrandt Way, Colchester, Essex CO3 4QS

## Inspection dates

22–23 May 2018

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an inadequate school

- The school's safeguarding systems and procedures are not secure. This potentially compromises pupils' safety and welfare, particularly for those who are vulnerable. Some vulnerable pupils do not feel safe.
- Leadership over time has been ineffective in maintaining the standards achieved at the time of the previous inspection.
- Systems to monitor, evaluate and review the school's work lack rigour. Some roles and responsibilities are unclear.
- Pupils' progress was poor at the end of key stage 4 in 2017. In particular, the most able pupils and disadvantaged pupils did not make the progress of which they were capable.
- The quality of teaching over time is not consistently strong. This leads to low-level disruptive behaviour in some lessons and poorly presented or incomplete work.
- The attendance of students in the sixth form at 85% is too low.
- Lines of communication between the school and parents and carers, as well as between staff within the school, have lacked effectiveness.
- Many parents are highly critical of various aspects of the school. They have particular concerns about homework.
- Careers guidance is sparse in key stage 3.

### The school has the following strengths

- The two acting headteachers have quickly identified key areas for improvement. They have gained the confidence and support of a strong team of middle leaders and an enlarged and highly skilled team of trustees.
- Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities achieve well, including those in the specialist resourced provision.
- Staff feel supported, and new teachers are guided appropriately.
- The school's current information on pupils' progress indicates that the sharp decline in standards in 2017 has been halted and progress is improving.
- Students in the sixth form make good progress. They make a key contribution to the life of the school.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted particularly well.

## Full report

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

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

- Urgently improve procedures for the safeguarding of children by:
  - clarifying the roles and responsibilities of the safeguarding team
  - setting up clearer systems for recording safeguarding referrals and monitoring the effectiveness of safeguarding in the school.
- Strengthen leadership, management and governance by ensuring that:
  - school improvement planning is based on accurate self-evaluation, with appropriate actions and measurable outcomes
  - there is effective communication between the school and parents, and between leaders and other members of staff
  - parents are kept fully informed about the progress pupils make
  - the roles of the local governing body and the board of trustees are clear, so that together their expertise can be drawn upon fully and used to best effect.
- Improve the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes by ensuring that:
  - teachers make more effective use of assessments of pupils' progress to plan for learning that challenges all pupils, particularly those who are most able and those who are disadvantaged
  - teachers set higher expectations regarding pupils' completion of their work
  - pupils are fully occupied and do not waste time in lessons
  - teachers have higher expectations about the way pupils' work is presented
  - pupils in key stage 3 are provided with appropriate careers education
  - leaders act swiftly on the findings of the recent homework survey.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare by:
  - making sure that vulnerable pupils feel safe
  - eliminating low-level disruptive behaviour in classrooms
  - improving attendance, particularly in the sixth form.

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

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

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Inadequate

- Standards have declined in the school since the previous inspection. The quality of teaching, learning and assessment has weakened. Pupils' outcomes have suffered as a result of poor leadership over time.
- Although the then senior leaders produced a school improvement plan for the current academic year, this did not include the views of the whole senior leadership team and included little evidence of any meaningful evaluation. There are no systems to evaluate the whole school's effectiveness. Hence, the improvement plan is not informed by the school's strengths and weaknesses and is not a helpful document to drive improvement.
- A significant proportion of parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, were critical of the school. An unusually large proportion of parents also took the opportunity to elaborate on their views through the free-text facility. One parent wrote, 'In my opinion, the school has let down my children.' Parents are particularly critical of the school's homework policy and also of the poor communication between the school and home. They feel that they have not been sufficiently consulted when the school proposes changes that they regard as important. They also say that they do not understand how well their child is achieving at the school.
- Clear and transparent systems to lead and manage the school have not been established until recently. Some key information has not been readily shared between the school's most senior leaders and other members of staff and governors. As a result, there is a lack of shared understanding between them.
- The acting headteachers have risen to the challenge of leading the school. They have secured the full support of staff, including the many middle leaders, as well as the local governing body.
- The acting headteachers have already produced a short-term emergency action plan to address some of the shortfalls identified when they took on the interim leadership of the school. This carefully considered plan sets out strategies to share leadership responsibilities more widely, and to set up systems to evaluate the impact of leaders' actions and evaluate the school's overall effectiveness. The plan also rightly identifies ways to look at how well behavioural incidents are addressed, seeks out other schools to validate teachers' assessments of pupils' progress, and also how to improve communication with parents.
- A promising example of how the interim leaders have reflected on current practice and aimed to be more collaborative is the review of the current homework policy. They are very well aware of parents' negative views of the current system and have carried out a survey involving parents, pupils and staff. The findings of the survey will determine how the school approaches homework.
- Leaders ensure that teachers are provided with appropriate professional development opportunities. Newly qualified teachers and staff who are new to the school who met with inspectors were positive about the support they are given.
- The additional funding for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities has been used

effectively to ensure that these pupils achieve well during their time at the school. The Year 7 catch-up funding has also been used to good effect in improving pupils' literacy and numeracy skills.

- The curriculum is broad and balanced, although financial constraints have resulted in less popular subjects not being offered as options in key stage 4. The acting headteachers have swiftly reviewed the proposed curriculum offer for the next academic year and have made amendments to best support pupils in key stage 4. Extra-curricular provision is catered for through a wide range of clubs and activities.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well. Many pupils are involved in raising funds for good causes and a fair number of pupils in Year 11 take part in the National Citizenship Service. The school ensures that its own values replicate British values.

### **Governance of the school**

- The quality of governance of the school, over time, is variable. It is clear that governors have not always challenged the school's leaders consistently well. They report that information they have requested has not always been readily produced, or has not been provided in the format they requested.
- Governors have supported the two acting headteachers since the moment they were requested to provide interim leadership of the school in March 2018. The chair of the local governing body has met with the interim leaders on many occasions, and is keen to see the role of governors develop and strengthen.
- The addition of four highly skilled trustees to the board has clearly added to its capacity. These trustees have the necessary skills and background to provide a high degree of support and challenge. In addition, the trustees have enlisted the support of a local headteacher to act as an adviser, and there are plans to increase this level of support.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.
- Systems for managing safeguarding concerns are not robust. Inspectors' scrutiny of the school's systems and record keeping relating to safeguarding matters identified serious flaws. Meetings with the large number of staff involved in safeguarding revealed weaknesses in record keeping and in the consistent implementation of procedures. This means that pupils are potentially placed at risk because necessary referrals to outside agencies not being made with sufficient urgency.
- The large number of people in the safeguarding team requires everyone involved to communicate effectively with one another. This is currently not the case. A large number of cause-for-concern cards have been produced, which necessitate meticulous record keeping, but safeguarding staff have not ensured that this is the case.
- Staff have received and read the necessary documentation relating to the safeguarding of children. Staff training is up to date, including training in the 'Prevent' duty.
- The school's single central record of recruitment checks of staff is compliant with

current requirements.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching over time has been too variable. This had led to inconsistency in the quality of pupils' learning and the rates of progress made by pupils.
- Teaching does not consistently challenge pupils, particularly the most able pupils. This sometimes leads to distracted off-task behaviour and means that the flow of teaching is interrupted because teachers spend too long on behaviour management matters.
- Inspectors' scrutiny of pupils' books shows that, too often, classwork is not completed. Some work in books is messy, particularly that of boys. Handwriting can be untidy. Some pupils continue to make the same errors in their work, even though errors have been highlighted teachers several months before.
- Time in lessons is often not used to best effect. Sometimes, all pupils do the same work when it is not appropriate to do so. This means that the most able pupils finish the work and are left with nothing to do. This stalls their progress. Some teachers do not check that pupils have understood what they are learning, which means that pupils can easily fall behind.
- The majority of parents who completed the Ofsted online questionnaire, including those who added additional free-text comments or spoke to inspectors during the inspection, have little confidence in the current homework policy. This had led to great resentment on their part.
- Although pupils receive effective careers information, advice and guidance in key stage 4, there is little provision for pupils in key stage 3. This places pupils at a disadvantage compared with pupils of a similar age in other schools.
- Where learning is more effective in making sure that pupils make progress, teachers' planning is informed by what pupils are capable of achieving. This means that teachers plan learning that meets the needs of different groups of pupils.
- Teachers typically have secure subject knowledge and, where progress is stronger, they use questioning effectively to test pupils' understanding and deepen their knowledge.
- When activities fully occupy pupils, teachers provide work that challenges them, and when pupils finish, there is always something else that is meaningful for pupils to do.
- Teachers provide suitable support for reading. Pupils read with fluency and expression.
- Teaching assistants play a key role in working with pupils who face challenges in accessing the work. Inspectors saw these adults working well with pupils who need additional support, by helping them to understand the work and supporting them to complete their tasks.
- Teachers assess pupils' progress regularly using various forms of testing. They have sought support from other schools to ensure that their assessments of pupils' progress become more accurate.

**Personal development and welfare**

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate. This is because the ineffective arrangements to safeguard pupils put them at risk. Staff responsible for safeguarding showed themselves to be highly disorganised when safeguarding systems were analysed by inspectors. They have received almost 1,500 cause-for-concern internal referrals from teachers since September 2017. Inspectors found that some of these concerns had not been managed appropriately by staff responsible for safeguarding.
- Pupils, including those who are vulnerable, told inspectors that they do not feel safe. They told inspectors they are too worried to report incidents of bullying. They also told inspectors that they do not report things to their house managers because they are 'too busy'. One pupil thanked inspectors for being given the opportunity to express her concerns, saying, 'I've had enough here'.
- Some parents who responded to Parent View expressed concern about pupils' well-being in the school. Although bullying is not a major problem in the school, some of the more vulnerable pupils who met with inspectors said that they sometimes feel unsafe, and that when they report bullying, it sometimes continues.
- Pupils are taught effectively to identify different forms of bullying in their tutorial times and say that they are able to report concerns to an appropriate member of staff. The school adopts a restorative justice approach when dealing with such issues. All pupils in the school are expected to sign up to the anti-bullying charter, and this is on display prominently.
- The 'Thrive House' works well with some of the more vulnerable pupils to build resilience, independence and self-esteem. The school provided some convincing examples of how pupils who access this provision have developed into well-rounded individuals.
- The school provides a range of opportunities for pupils to develop their leadership skills and to increase their confidence and self-esteem. Such responsibilities include being a sports or anti-bullying ambassador, or becoming an active member of the school council.
- The school promotes a strong understanding of and respect for those who have protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. For example, the school works well with pupils who are hearing impaired or visually impaired. The school is proactive in promoting a strongly inclusive culture and runs a club for pupils who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender.
- Pupils who attend alternative provision in key stages 3 or 4 are routinely monitored by the special educational needs coordinator.

**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. There is too much low-level disruptive behaviour in lessons. This is particularly the case when teaching does not interest all

pupils or meet their specific needs. This leads to pupils losing concentration or talking to their friends when the teacher is talking.

- Some pupils' presentation of their work is untidy, particularly that of boys.
- Some pupils say that teachers do not implement the school's classroom behaviour system consistently well, and feel that this is unfair.
- The school has a range of strategies to encourage pupils to attend school regularly and has taken appropriate action to support parents who struggle to send their children to school. However, although pupils' persistent absence has improved over time, there has been less of an impact on improving pupils' overall attendance, which remains broadly average.
- The number of pupils who are excluded from the school has fallen slightly, although the total number of exclusions has slightly increased compared with the previous year.
- Pupils typically wear their uniform smartly. They are proud of their school. They socialise with one another well during their morning break and at lunchtimes.

### Outcomes for pupils

### Requires improvement

- Pupils made insufficient progress at the end of key stage 4 in 2017. Pupils with high prior attainment in particular did not make the progress of which they are capable. The most able pupils did not achieve well in English, mathematics, science and modern foreign languages, although they fared better in humanities.
- Disadvantaged pupils continue to underachieve.
- There is also some variation in pupils' progress within subject areas, depending on the quality of teaching pupils experience over time.
- Pupils who have low prior attainment make better progress from their starting points compared with others in the school.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, including the pupils who have hearing impairment in the specialist provision, make progress comparable to that of pupils with similar starting points nationally, due to the effective support from additional adults in the classroom and the carefully targeted SEN funding available to the school.
- The school's assessment information on current pupils' progress, as well as inspectors' scrutiny of pupils' work across a range of subjects and in both key stages 3 and 4, indicate that pupils' progress is now improving.
- Pupils' literacy skills are developed well due to the school's promotion of the importance of reading. Mathematical skills are also being better developed when the opportunity arises across a range of subjects.

### 16 to 19 study programmes

### Inadequate

- The sixth-form provision is inadequate overall, solely due to the flaws in the leadership and management of safeguarding matters. The sixth-form provision is housed within the same school, and the procedures for managing sixth-form safeguarding matters are the same as for the rest of the school. Although sixth-form students say that they

feel safe, endemic weaknesses in the management of safeguarding matters make them unsafe.

- Students' attendance in the sixth form is also not high enough. At just above 85%, it is well below the school's own target of 95% and raises concerns about the whereabouts of students who are absent.
- Effective leadership of the sixth form has ensured that students typically experience good-quality teaching and make good progress from their below-average starting points. Students who attend the VI6 provision at the University of Essex also make good progress.
- The proportion of students gaining top grades at A-level in 2017 was impressive at 35%. School leaders quickly identify students who are at risk of falling behind with their studies and provide timely support, although this is more challenging to achieve for those students who attend school less regularly than they should. The few students who follow vocational courses make broadly expected progress.
- Teachers in the sixth form have strong subject knowledge and convey their enthusiasm for their subjects well. This motivates students to want to achieve and they speak positively about the quality of teaching they receive. Attitudes to learning are positive, although, as already stated, attendance is not high enough.
- A good proportion of students who re-sit qualifications in English and/or mathematics are successful in Year 12.
- Students enjoy being members of the sixth form and many see this provision as a natural next step when considering their options at the end of Year 11. Students are offered many opportunities to develop their leadership skills. They support pupils lower down the school and organise events, including 'Help the homeless' and the Year 7 disco.
- Careers advice and guidance are strong features of the provision. Students have meaningful discussions about their next steps and receive independent careers guidance talks from business representatives. All students are strongly encouraged to do work experience in Year 12. The vast majority who leave the sixth form go on to higher education or apprenticeships.



## School details

|                         |          |
|-------------------------|----------|
| Unique reference number | 137619   |
| Local authority         | Essex    |
| Inspection number       | 10046222 |

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

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Type of school  | Secondary comprehensive  |
| School category                                       | Academy sponsor-led  |
| Age range of pupils                                   | 11 to 18   |
| Gender of pupils                                      | Mixed  |
| Gender of students in 16 to 19 study programmes       | Mixed  |
| Number of pupils on the school roll                   | 1,610  |
| Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes | 104  |
| Appropriate authority                                 | Board of trustees  |
| Chair   | Neil Jones   |
| Acting headteachers                                   | Michele Myers and Colin Green  |
| Executive headteacher                                 | Catherine Hutley   |
| Telephone number                                      | 01206 545222   |
| Website   | <a href="http://www.philipmorant.essex.sch.uk">www.philipmorant.essex.sch.uk</a>             |
| Email address   | <a href="mailto:theschool@philipmorant.essex.sch.uk">theschool@philipmorant.essex.sch.uk</a> |
| Date of previous inspection                           | 25 March 2015  |

## Information about this school

- Philip Morant School and College is sponsored by the Thrive Trust. The trust is formed of this school and Colne Community School and College, which is based in Brightlingsea.
- The chief executive officer of the trust and the executive headteacher have been absent from the school since 23 March 2018. The school's two vice-principals have been acting headteachers since 24 March 2018.
- The school is larger than the average-sized secondary school.

- Most pupils are of White British background. The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language are well below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is below the national average, but the proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is above average.
- The school houses a specialist resourced provision for pupils who have hearing impairment. These pupils are taught in mainstream classes for the majority of their timetable.
- The school makes use of the services of Nova Training in Colchester for pupils in key stages 3 and 4. Some students in the sixth form study some of their courses at the VI6 provision at the University of Essex.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

## Information about this inspection

- This inspection was conducted with one day's notice.
- Inspectors observed pupils' learning across all year groups and across a wide range of subjects. Inspectors looked at pupils' books across a wide range of subjects and year groups. Work scrutinised represented different groups of pupils in the school, including disadvantaged pupils, most-able disadvantaged pupils, higher attaining pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- Meetings were held with the acting headteachers, other senior leaders, subject leaders and non-teaching house managers, different groups of pupils, and the chair of the governing body. A meeting also took place with the chair of the trustees, a representative of the local authority and an adviser who is currently supporting the school. Telephone conversations took place with a newly appointed vice-chair of the trustees and a number of parents.
- Inspectors scrutinised: school improvement documents; policies; information on pupils' progress; records of the quality of teaching; information on pupils' behaviour and attendance; and the single central record of recruitment checks of staff.
- Inspectors considered 341 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and 102 responses to the staff questionnaire. Ofsted also took account of numerous letters and emails received from parents. There were 19 responses to the pupil survey and 266 free-text comments from parents.

## Inspection team

|                              |                         |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| John Daniell, lead inspector | Her Majesty's Inspector |
| Sharon Wilson                | Ofsted Inspector        |
| Brenda Watson                | Ofsted Inspector        |
| Simon Bell                   | Ofsted Inspector        |
| David Davies                 | Ofsted Inspector        |

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