

Inspection of a good school: Prenton High School for Girls

Hesketh Avenue, Rock Ferry, Birkenhead, Merseyside CH42 6RR

Inspection dates:

29 and 30 November 2022

Outcome

Prenton High School for Girls continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud to be part of this caring community. The school values are trust, respect, integrity, kindness and endeavour. Pupils understand these values and try to live up to them by working hard and looking after each other. Pupils say they enjoy coming to school because teachers are kind and know them well as individuals.

Pupils' behaviour matches the high expectations of staff. During social times, pupils enjoy chatting with their friends or attending one of many clubs and societies provided by staff. The school is a calm place to walk around.

Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe when they are in school. They are confident that they can approach staff for help if they have a problem. Staff do their best to ensure that any bullying is sorted out quickly and effectively.

Leaders have very high expectations of pupils' academic achievement. In lessons, pupils listen to their teachers and concentrate on their work. They work hard and achieve well.

The 'Learning for Life' personal development curriculum provides pupils with the knowledge they need to live safe and happy lives. Older pupils have the opportunity to become part of the student leadership team and are excellent role models for pupils in Years 7 and 8.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders, including governors, have ensured that all pupils, including those with SEND, have access to a suitably broad and ambitious curriculum. Leaders ensure that all pupils follow a curriculum which meets their specific needs and career aspirations.

Subject leaders have designed curriculums well. They have thought carefully about the order in which they want pupils to learn key knowledge. Pupils build up their knowledge

in a logical way. Curriculum design is particularly effective in some subjects. This is because leaders have ensured that what pupils learn is challenging and exposes them to new and interesting ideas.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge. They deliver subject curriculums well. Many teachers show an infectious enthusiasm for their subjects, which pupils readily respond to. Teachers ensure that pupils' knowledge and skills develop well across the curriculum. In most subjects, learning is carefully checked by teachers. In a very small number of subjects not enough thought has been given to the retention of learning. This means that a few pupils find it difficult to recall some of the topics they have learned previously in these subjects. Therefore, they cannot make sufficient connections between their current learning and what they have learned in the past.

Pupils behave well both in lessons and during social times. Lessons typically take place without disruption. Pupils are polite and respectful to both their teachers and their peers. Recently, leaders have made some changes to their behaviour policy. Most pupils are responding well to this new policy because it encourages staff to reward good behaviour. It allows time for pupils to reflect on their own behaviour when things have gone wrong.

Leaders accurately identify the needs of pupils with SEND. They know these pupils and their individual needs very well. Staff are well trained in SEND matters and use the information from leaders to support pupils with SEND in their lessons. This helps pupils with SEND to progress through the same ambitious subject curriculums as their peers.

Recently, leaders have developed their systems to identify pupils whose reading knowledge is weak when they join the school. Leaders can pinpoint the knowledge that individual pupils need to improve their reading. Most pupils become more confident readers because of the support they receive. Leaders have developed some imaginative strategies to encourage reading for pleasure. Younger pupils have responded well to the range of books selected by staff for reading during form time and in English lessons.

Leaders have a well-designed personal development curriculum in place. They have consulted widely with pastoral staff, pupils and parents to ensure that the 'Learning for Life' topics are the right ones for the age of the pupils and the context of the school community. Pupils learn about relationships, sex and health matters, equality issues and how to manage money. They are also introduced to the workings of the British political system.

Pupils receive age-appropriate careers education, information, advice and guidance. All pupils receive independent advice about future careers and learn about wider opportunities through a well-designed curriculum.

Staff appreciate how leaders and governors protect them from excessive workload. Leaders and governors share a strong moral purpose in order to promote the well-being of everyone within the school community.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong safeguarding culture across the school. Leaders are very well informed about a wide range of safeguarding issues. They ensure that safeguarding training for staff is thorough. As a result, staff know how to identify the signs that may indicate that pupils are at risk of harm. Staff share their concerns in a timely manner. School has a range of in-house support for vulnerable pupils and for their parents. They also make referrals to outside agencies to ensure that pupils and their families get the help that they need.

Pupils learn about how to keep safe either online or in the local community.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of subjects not enough thought has been given to the retention of learning. Therefore, a few pupils find it difficult to recall elements of their prior learning. They find it hard to make connections between what they have previously learned and their current learning. Leaders should ensure that in these subjects teachers revisit key topics and concepts to ensure that learning is regularly reinforced.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in November 2017.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	137130
Local authority	Wirral
Inspection number	10240718
Type of school	Secondary modern
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Girls
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	N/A
Number of pupils on the school roll	790
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	N/A
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Lyn Eaton
Headteacher	Lisa Ayling
Website	www.prentonhighschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	29 November 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Small numbers of pupils attend alternative provision at one of seven registered alternative providers.
- On the two days of the inspection, the headteacher was absent from school. The initial telephone conversation and subsequent meetings were held with the deputy headteacher and other members of the senior leadership team.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection that the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the deputy headteacher, senior leaders and subject leaders.

- The lead inspector met with governors and spoke to a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's records of safeguarding checks and referrals to the local authority. Inspectors spoke with staff about how they keep pupils safe. Inspectors also asked the pupils how they keep themselves safe and what to do if they have concerns.
- Inspectors held discussions with staff and considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils and students from all year groups and considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for pupils.
- Inspectors considered the views of the parents who responded to Ofsted Parent View. This included the free-text responses.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, science and history. Inspectors met with subject leaders, discussed the curriculum, visited lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

Inspection team

Timothy Gartside, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Stephanie Gill	Ofsted Inspector

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