

# Prior Pursglove College

Inspection report

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Unique reference number: 130575

Name of lead inspector: Heather Barnett HMI

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Type of provider: Sixth form college

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## Information about the provider

1. Prior Pursglove College was originally founded as Guisborough Grammar School in the 1500s. The school became voluntary controlled in 1958 and has been a co-educational sixth form college since 1971, merging with South Park Sixth Form College in 1997. The Priory Campus is a compact site in the centre of Guisborough. A capital programme made jointly with Askham Bryan College has recently been completed, providing a £6.25 million project to accommodate the students of both colleges on the site. A new senior management team has been in place since September 2009.
2. Redcar & Cleveland is an area of deprivation, having an unemployment rate consistently double the national rate. Socially and economically, the college's recruitment area covers a wide spectrum, from former ironstone mining villages and heavy industry, to relatively affluent residential and light industrial areas. In Redcar & Cleveland in 2009, the achievement rate for five or more GCSE grades A\* to C including English and mathematics was 48.5% compared to a national average of 49.8%. The college is involved in a number of partnerships and works collaboratively with the local authority, local schools, Askham Bryan and Redcar & Cleveland Colleges, and Teesside University.
3. In September 2009, the college had 1,546 full-time students aged 16 to 18, mostly on level 3 courses. Provision for adults has increased over the last few years and, in addition to part-time further education courses mostly in the evening, now includes learndirect, and Train to Gain courses. The college also carries out project-funded work such as those for offenders and young people not in education, employment or training (NEET). There are more female than male students in both age groups. The vast majority of students are of White British heritage although the college enrolls a higher percentage of students from minority ethnic groups than is found in the local population.
4. The college provides training on behalf of the following providers:
  - Stockton Borough Council (offender learning and skills)
  - Redcar and Cleveland BC (16 to 18 year olds who are NEET)
  - Askham Bryan College (key skills for adults)

Type of provision	Number of enrolled learners in 2008/09
Young learner provision: 14 to 16	6 learners
Further education (16 to 18)	1,546 full-time learners 116 part-time learners
Adult learner provision: Further education (19+)	33 full-time learners; 913 part-time learners
Employer provision: Train to Gain	68 learners

## Summary report

Grades: 1 is outstanding; 2 is good; 3 is satisfactory; 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness of provision	Grade 2
Capacity to improve	Grade 2
	Grade
Outcomes for learners	2
Quality of provision	2
Leadership and management	2
Safeguarding	2
Equality and diversity	2
Subject Areas	
Science and mathematics	2
Arts, media and publishing	2
Languages, literature and culture	2
Business, administration and law	3

## Overall effectiveness

5. Prior Pursglove is a good college with a good capacity to improve. Outcomes for students are good, especially on General Certificate of Education (GCE) A levels. Achievements on GCE AS courses are more variable; however, actions put in place to address this issue are already showing positive impact. Adult students do well across a range of provision. Students make good progress in their studies and develop high levels of skills, such as employability skills. Students make an outstanding contribution to the local community, working very well with a wide range of groups and organisations.
6. Teaching and learning are good. The majority of lessons provide an effective range of activities to meet students' needs and use information and learning technology (ILT) very well. In a small minority of lessons there is insufficient challenge for the more able and there is too much variability in the quality of written lesson plans. Partnership working is outstanding. The college has

broadened effectively its range of provision, which meets needs and interests well. The college provides good care, guidance and support for its students.

7. The new leadership team has a zeal for improvement and has put a number of strategies in place, which are already having positive effects. The vision for the college is communicated well to staff and students and provides a strong basis for future developments. The use of data and the monitoring of targets and action plans are improving. The key aims now are to ensure that initiatives are fully embedded in all areas and brought together to achieve maximum effect, and that existing good practice is shared effectively and utilised.

## Main findings

- Success rates on GCE A-level courses are high and have been so for a number of years. On GCE AS programmes, success rates are lower and there are more varied patterns between subjects. Success rates for adults are high on a range of provision.
- Students make good progress in lessons. They develop high levels of subject-specific skills and their practical work is good. Good development of language, literacy and numeracy skills helps students to achieve their goals. Students enjoy their studies and attendance rates are high.
- Students make good improvements in their economic and social well-being through involvement in a wide range of enterprise activities including work experience and successful involvement in competitions. Students are highly involved in a wide range of collaborative work with business, schools, charities, voluntary organisations and local public services to the benefit of the local community.
- The majority of lessons are stimulating and have a good range of activities to engage and motivate. Technology is well used to support teaching and learning. However, in a small minority of lessons there is insufficient challenge for some students and there is too much variability in the quality of written lesson plans.
- Arrangements to ensure the quality of teaching and learning are well established and inspectors' findings confirmed the college's observation findings. Most observation records are thorough and detailed although a small minority do not provide sufficient evidence for the grade awarded, or focus sufficiently on learning.
- The college offers a broad range of programmes. Full-time students benefit from a good programme of enrichment activities. Programmes are well planned and provide students with clear progression routes. Information about learning and support needs is routinely gathered and used to ensure that students are on appropriate programmes.
- The college's use of partnerships to develop its provision is outstanding. The college is viewed as a significant local strategic partner driving many developments in the area. Successful work with other colleges ensures that duplication of provision is avoided. Partnerships with schools ensure coherent

development opportunities. Work with local community groups and employers extends opportunities to areas where participation in learning is traditionally low.

- Care, guidance and support are good. Students receive timely advice and guidance throughout their programmes. College tutors collaborate effectively to ensure that students make good progress. Employers value the high level of personal support offered by tutors.
- The college is a safe and welcoming place for students and it is proud of its inclusive admissions policy. The safeguarding of students and its promotion are embedded across the college. Students say that they feel safe and engage in an open dialogue with staff during their many opportunities for consultation.
- The college has invested wisely in new accommodation, some of which has been built in partnership with a local land-based college. Buildings are mainly attractive and used well; however, the self-assessment report acknowledges a lack of social space for students.
- A new senior team is committed to developing a compelling mission, and the vision and values for the college. These rightly focus on improvements to students' outcomes while maintaining a focus on care and support. Arrangements for data-driven quality improvement have been strengthened since the previous inspection and are being spread across all areas but are not yet fully embedded.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is good. The college's commitment to developing provision for less traditional students has been built on good multi-agency working and taking a strong lead in local partnerships. The college has encouraged the development of a respectful atmosphere in which students are encouraged to aim high.
- The college has an extensive self-assessment process to which all contribute. Good progress is being made on a detailed action plan alongside many other initiatives to follow up further strategic objectives. Approaches to the sharing of good practice are underdeveloped.

### What does Prior Pursglove College need to do to improve further?

- Fully embed the strategies to improve GCE AS success rates so that all students achieve their potential.
- Further develop lesson planning so that all students are fully engaged and challenged.
- Consolidate the range of existing initiatives across the college into a coherent strategic approach.
- Fully utilise existing good practice across the college to raise standards and reduce inconsistencies between subjects.
- Fully embed the use of data across all areas of the college to set targets and monitor improvement.

## Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors

### What learners like:

- the supportive staff
- the welcoming and friendly atmosphere
- how much they learn and the progress they make in their studies and careers
- the good teaching they receive
- the wide choice of course
- the extra support they receive from individuals and in the workshops
- the help they get in applying to higher education
- the information and learning technology in the college
- the childcare facilities
- how their courses help to increase their confidence.

### What learners would like to see improved:

- the amount of social space available
- the '7 habits of highly effective teenagers' programme
- accommodation at some outreach sites
- transport to and from college.

## Summary of the views of employers as confirmed by inspectors

The views of employers have not been included here as few comments were received.

## Main inspection report

### Capacity to make and sustain improvement

Grade 2

8. The college has good capacity to improve. It has made good progress in addressing all areas for improvement since the last inspection. The new senior team has a clear vision for the future, knows the college well and has introduced a range of initiatives to secure improvements, with well-focused action plans and close and regular monitoring of impact. Managers are keen to make progress and are backed by experienced and committed governors. Managers recognise that GCE AS students do not always do as well as they should and that success rates and the proportion of high grades can improve further.
9. Employers speak highly of the college and its contributions to their businesses. Local schools appreciate the lead that the college has taken in developing a curriculum to meet the needs of their pupils. The student voice is a strong force for improvement. The self-assessment process is thorough. Detailed quality reporting enables focused target setting for staff and students, for example in the new system for minimum target grades for the students. Impact can be seen in the high and improving levels of retention and attendance of students.

### Outcomes for learners

Grade 2

10. Outcomes for students are good. Success rates on GCE A-level courses are high and have been so for a number of years. On GCE AS programmes success rates are lower and there are more varied patterns between subjects. The college has identified the causes of the problem and has put intervention strategies in place, which are already showing a positive impact. In the current academic year, retention has improved on the vast majority of courses and individual students' progress reviews show a large reduction in students underperforming. Success rates at level 1 are high and are well above national rates. At level 2, success rates are around the national rate for students aged 16 to 18, and well above for adults.
11. In 2008/09 students made at least the progress expected of them, when comparing their results to their previous qualifications, on GCE AS- and A-level provision, and much better progress than expected on Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) courses. Students make good progress in lessons. They develop high levels of skills and their practical work is good. Students develop language, literacy and numeracy skills very well, which support them in achieving their aims. Students enjoy their studies and attendance rates are high and improving.
12. The college has been broadening successfully its provision, particularly focusing on attracting people back into learning. On the learndirect programme success rates are strong in the Skills for Life area. Outcomes are good for learners who are NEET, and on the offender learning programme. On the recently introduced



Train to Gain programme success rates are very high. Success rates on short courses for adults are high.

13. There are no trends showing significant variations in the attainment of different groups, for example by gender. The college analyses data effectively to track patterns and has picked up on any minor issues and put effective strategies in place to address them. Students receiving additional learning support make the same or better progress than their peers.
14. A wide range of public and private organisations are involved in providing good work-experience placements for many students. Students benefit from well-established enterprise activities including very successful involvement in the Young Enterprise competition at regional and national levels.
15. Students say that the college is a welcoming and safe place to study and has a strong ethos of mutual respect. Students feel confident that bullying or harassment is not tolerated and that should such incidents be reported they would be quickly and effectively dealt with. The management of health and safety within the college is good.
16. Students are well supported to make informed choices about their health and well-being. An effective annual health week engages students in a wide range of activities, and healthy living is well promoted throughout the college. Products aimed at promoting health and sexual awareness, developed through Young Enterprise activity, have been adopted in local schools.
17. Students make an outstanding contribution to the college and the local community through an extensive range of activities. Students' involvement in local consultative groups has been very good, including media students' collaboration with the local police to produce a video, which is now used in local schools. Students are very active in charity fund-raising activities, in working with local schools and in supporting voluntary organisations. The college involves some students well in sustainable development activities within the college.

## The quality of provision

Grade 2

18. Teaching and learning are good. The majority of lessons provide a stimulating learning environment and have a good range of well-paced activities to meet the varied needs of students. Checking of students' understanding is frequent, with good use of challenging and targeted questioning. Lessons have a productive and motivating atmosphere with students thoroughly engaged in their studies and confident to ask questions and seek support. Equality and diversity are promoted well in most lessons. Students generally make good progress in their lessons.
19. The minority of less effective lessons are overly reliant on teacher-led activity, provide insufficient differentiation to challenge all students, or have less effective use of questioning to check understanding. While the majority of

lessons are well planned, the quality of written lesson plans is too variable with the least effective insufficiently identifying the learning objectives of the students.

20. The use of technology to support teaching and learning in lessons is good. Students' access to a range of learning support materials housed on the college portal is good. Accommodation, equipment and resources are generally good and there are effective displays of students' work or other relevant materials.
21. Arrangements for assessment of students' work are satisfactory and better. Work is set regularly and most is marked thoroughly with constructive comment for further development, and returned promptly. However, in some instances comments do not relate clearly to assessment criteria or targets for improvement are insufficiently specific.
22. Arrangements to assure the quality of teaching and learning are well established. The proportion of good and better teaching and learning observations shows an increase year on year. Inspectors' findings agreed with the college's observation judgements. Observations graded satisfactory lead to support and development although the resulting agreed actions are too often insufficiently specific or measurable. Most observation records are thorough and detailed although a minority do not provide compelling written evidence for the grade awarded or focus insufficiently on learning within the observed lesson.
23. The college meets the needs and interests of students well, offering a broad choice of qualifications and levels that is reviewed regularly. An effective community outreach programme provides opportunities for adult students to improve their skills. Online courses offered through learndirect and training programmes in health and business extend opportunities to gain formal qualifications for students in areas where participation in learning is generally low. Programmes for adult students are delivered with a particularly good degree of flexibility.
24. Programmes are carefully planned to ensure that students progress smoothly from school to college. The college uses a broad range of methods to assess students' skills and abilities on entry to ensure that they are on appropriate programmes. Information recorded about students on community learning programmes lacks detail. Students are offered a good range of enrichment activities, both as additional courses and within most curriculum areas. Students enhance their employability through access to a range of additional qualifications and skills development opportunities, including work experience.
25. The college's use of partnerships to develop its provision is outstanding. It is viewed as a significant strategic partner bringing organisations together and facilitating the sharing of ideas and good practice. It works very well with local strategic bodies to plan and develop provision and is seen as the leading local contributor to the development of adult education. Partnership working with other colleges is strong, effectively ensuring that provision is not duplicated.

26. The college works well with local schools to increase the learning opportunities available to pupils. Partnership arrangements with higher education providers and local training organisations promote progression to higher level programmes and employment very effectively. Progression onto higher education courses is good. The college works particularly well with local community organisations; they view the college as a successful agent for transforming lives and meeting community needs.
27. Care, guidance and support are good. Students receive timely information, advice and guidance prior to enrolling at the college through a wide programme of link activities with local schools. Information gathered at the start of students' programmes is used well to identify support needs and well-established arrangements ensure that these needs are addressed. Arrangements to evaluate fully the impact of the support offered to students are underdeveloped. Employers value the high level of personal support offered by tutors; however, in many cases this support is poorly documented.
28. Personal, subject and learning support tutors collaborate effectively to provide support. A traffic light warning system is used well to monitor progress, highlight concerns and to record actions taken to bring about improvement. The tutorial curriculum provides students with relevant and timely guidance about their chosen progression routes. The college has recently introduced a personal development and motivation programme, 'The 7 habits of highly effective teenagers'. It is too early to judge this programme's impact.

## Leadership and management

## Grade 2

29. Leadership and management are good. Under the new leadership, developments have taken place to provide a strong foundation for future progress including the better use of data for target setting. The Principal and senior leaders are currently working with the governors and staff, with a zeal for improvement, to revise the college mission, values and strategy. A new approach to performance management has been piloted which is better focused and informed by detailed data on achievement, retention, high grades and added value. Meeting the needs of the local community and sustaining a caring and supportive environment are central to the college's ambitions, which are now aligned with the need to improve GCE AS success rates.
30. Governors are committed and enthusiastic and their extensive skills and broad experience have been useful to the college, particularly in the areas of financial management and health and safety. Members of the corporation gain additional understanding of the college through regular training and their link roles. They are developing their role in challenging aspects of the college's performance and self-assessment has identified their attendance as an area for improvement.
31. The college has prioritised safeguarding and integrated safeguarding approaches into the curriculum and through cross-college publicity materials. Relevant policies are current and appropriately meet legal requirements,

although the college recognises that further work is needed to develop aspects of internet safety. All staff have had appropriate checks and have received basic training in safeguarding. There are good links with external agencies which include three students attending the local safeguarding board and one acting as its chair. The college has a detailed, focused safeguarding action plan.

32. Compared to the local population the college recruits a high number of students from minority ethnic groups. Collectively they make similar progress to other students, although there have been recent declines in the achievement of a few groups, which the college is taking action to address. A detailed action plan seeks to narrow attainment gaps and the college has recently been successful in a bid to undertake action research looking at the achievement of male students. The college has an appropriate equality and diversity policy and has just begun to consult on a single equality scheme.
33. The impact of the college's drive to serve disadvantaged groups is good and the college has forged effective links with partners in the community to extend its provision to many in more deprived communities. The college's 'REACH' approach has encouraged a respectful environment in which students are encouraged to aim high. More students are now going on to higher education; many are from families who have not previously progressed in this way.
34. The views of users are employed well to improve provision. Posters and the plasma screens around the college are used to give feedback to students and the college has a wide personal tutor representative system. The college has been responsive to requests about transport and has now changed a bus provider. Views of students are actively canvassed and there is a regular staff and student forum where discussions range widely.
35. The college has a good and extensive self-assessment process to which all departments contribute. The self-assessment is mainly accurate although strengths are occasionally overstated. Good progress is being made on a detailed action plan alongside many other actions to follow up further strategic objectives. There is now a greater focus on the careful monitoring of students' progress and the use of data which has had an early impact on improving retention. Approaches to the sharing of good practice are underdeveloped.
36. Value for money is good. Accommodation has been developed extensively and sympathetically over recent years to accommodate the increasing numbers of students and now provides an attractive learning environment with mainly good facilities for staff and students. However, the college recognises the shortage of social space for students.

## Subject areas

Science and mathematics

Grade 2

### Context

37. The subject area has 1,860 enrolments in science and mathematics. It offers 10 subjects at GCE AS and A level and two at GCSE; science and mathematics. The college has recently introduced the International Baccalaureate.

### Key findings

- Overall, outcomes for students are good. Success rates and the proportion of high grades achieved in GCE AS and A-level further mathematics are consistently above national figures. Students make better progress than predicted from their achievement in the GCSE.
- Success rates are high on all GCE A-level subjects, largely in line with the national average, as are retention rates and pass rates. In 2008/09, the proportion of passes at high grades was broadly in line with national figures in most subjects. Students make better progress than predicted in half of the subjects followed.
- Success rates on GCE AS levels and the proportion of high grades achieved have mostly been below national figures for the past three years. In 2008/09 students' progress was better than predicted in half of the subjects followed but had declined in the majority since 2007/08. Success rates on GCSE mathematics and science at grades A\* to C declined in 2008/09 but were above the national average in the previous two years.
- Students enjoy learning and make good progress in class and in course work, developing their skills, knowledge and understanding well. Marked work shows that they reach expected standards. Students' practical skills in science subjects are good. They are developing the number and language skills they need to be successful in their studies. Students feel safe and use safe working practices in science laboratories.
- Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are well planned to suit students' needs. Teachers offer a good variety of well-considered activities to motivate students and help them to develop their skills and knowledge and extend their understanding. Teachers provide a suitable mix of practical and theoretical work in the sciences. Materials are well presented and teachers often make good use of technology to support learning.
- Teachers check students' learning through the skilful use of questions, short tests, worked examples and other tasks. On a few occasions, however, questions were insufficiently probing or were directed towards the class as a whole. Teachers did not always provide sufficient challenge for the more able students. Students work diligently and attentively on the set tasks and are confident in asking for help when they need it.

- Assessment is good. Work is set, marked and returned with helpful comments, mostly within a reasonable time. Teachers and managers use an electronic monitoring system effectively to target help where it is most needed. Teachers provide good subject support informally and through timetabled workshops. Peer mentors help their classmates. Effective learning support is provided for those who need it to improve their literacy and numeracy skills.
- The college provides a good range of GCE AS and A-level subjects in science and mathematics. Students benefit from strong links with local schools and universities which support transition; they go into schools to promote science and mathematics. Subject-related enrichment such as the chemistry Olympiad and work experience complement academic studies. Students can choose from a good range of activities including sports and performing arts to extend their experience.
- Care, guidance and support are good. Students receive good advice to help them make choices about their futures. However, the proportion of students moving on from some GCE AS subjects to A level is low. The college supports students well in applying for employment, further and higher education. Students' needs for additional learning support are identified well. Appropriate support is provided for a range of learning difficulties and disabilities.
- Leadership and management are good. Data on student achievement and their feedback are used effectively in evaluative departmental reviews, although subject reviews are not always sufficiently rigorous. Clear action plans are monitored at team meetings. The observation of teaching and learning helps teachers to improve their practice. Accommodation is good on the whole; relevant and interesting displays support learning. Specialist equipment, ILT and technical support are good.

What does Prior Pursglove College need to do to improve further?

- Improve success rates and progress on underperforming GCE AS subjects.
- Improve questioning in lessons to check learning and help students to express their understanding more fully.
- Provide greater challenge in lessons for the more able students.

## Arts, media and publishing

## Grade 2

### Context

38. The college currently has 371 students on full-time programmes in art and design, 215 in media and film, 80 in performing arts and 54 in music. Most provision is GCE AS and A level, with a small range of vocational provision recently introduced. The majority of students are aged 16 to 18. There is one adult evening class in photography.

### Key findings

- Success rates are very high on GCE A-level photography, AS graphics and AS textiles; however, success rates on AS media, AS performing arts, AS music and AS music technology are low.
- Students make very good progress in art and design subjects. However, students do not always make the progress of which they are capable on GCE AS media, AS performing arts, AS music and music technology. This is reflected by the low proportion of students achieving high grades on these courses.
- The quality of students' practical work is good. Excellent sketchbook research work was seen in fine art and textiles. Experimental and exploratory techniques are encouraged and there is good use of mixed media and varied scale. Students use interesting manipulation of image in photography. Magazine work produced by media students has featured in a national showcase of students' work. Students develop good vocal skills in drama and thorough listening skills analysis in music.
- Students feel extremely safe and secure in what they describe as a very supportive family environment. They feel that there is no bullying on the premises and are confident that staff would respond appropriately if they were to report any concerns. They enjoy coming to the college and have a strong commitment to learning.
- Teaching and learning are good. Project briefs are interesting and provide stimulating opportunities for creative investigation. Useful handouts are provided to support learning and information is well accessed by students from the college portal. Students are encouraged to come into studios to work outside lesson times to extend and develop work. Some lessons have insufficient development of self-evaluative and analytical skills, and students are not encouraged to take notes in many lessons.
- Feedback to students is regular and of good quality. Some very careful and detailed feedback is given to students in media. Feedback sheets are included in sketchbooks in art and given after performance in performing arts. Verbal feedback is detailed and helpful. However, in a few subjects not enough focus is put on what students need to do to improve work.
- There is effective use of ILT in many subjects. Varied and relevant use of technology includes sound clips, hyperlinks, visual stimulus and varied

presentations. Equipment and resources are generally good with good access to computers and a good range of equipment and materials. Students' work is well displayed and celebrated. Some rooms are cramped and in need of refurbishment. Technician workspace is limited in drama and there is no specialist technician in media and film studies. The college recognises these issues and has plans in place to address them.

- A good range of creative courses is provided for the students aged 16 to 18. Course enrichment opportunities are good. Trips to London and New York are organised for art students and visits to craftspeople have direct impact on student work. The music department offers a good range of enrichment and peripatetic instrumental lessons are offered to any college student. Theatre productions are staged by performing arts students and media and film students go behind the scenes to learn the workings of the local cinema.
- Strong partnerships have been developed with Teesside University and good community links forged with a number of local agencies such as the police who have commissioned work from performing arts students. Art students regularly exhibit work at a local business headquarters.
- Support for students is good. Students receive good specialist subject support from their tutors and personal tutors provide a good link to college-wide support mechanisms. The traffic light system used to pick up on any underperformance ensures that there is effective follow up of any monitoring issues. Students with a range of disabilities have been well integrated and supported to achieve.
- Cultural diversity is well promoted through the curriculum via different genres of film and music, and the use of a variety of cultural influences in art and design. Examination board papers, which set a good range of culturally diverse stimulus for research, are used effectively by staff. Islamic and other multi-cultural drawing stimuli are used in art lessons.
- Leadership and management are good. The new manager in the recently created art and media department has a very clear view of raising standards and is putting a number of initiatives in place. It is too early to judge the full impact of these activities; however, there are already improvements in in-year retention and attendance.
- The self-assessment reports are broadly accurate and quality improvement plans clearly identify actions which are leading to improvement in key areas of the provision. Underperformance is not yet fully tackled in a few subject areas. Pockets of good practice are not sufficiently shared across the area.

What does Prior Pursglove College need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that students have improved chances of success and progress on underperforming courses by making sure that actions in the improvement plan are embedded.
- Develop further students' self-evaluation and analytical skills, and improve their study skills of note taking and annotation in lessons.



- Fully implement accommodation plans and resource improvements to ensure that students have access to appropriate accommodation, increased working space, specialist computers and technical support.
- Thoroughly embed the sharing of good practice within existing teams and by liaison with external best practice institutions.

## Languages, literature and culture

## Grade 2

### Context

39. The college offers a broad range of courses from introductory to advanced level in English and modern foreign languages. Modern foreign languages courses are also offered in the evening. Currently there are 789 enrolments across all subjects. The large majority of students are following GCE AS and A-level English courses and are aged 16 to 18 years. Around two thirds of students are female.

### Key findings

- Outcomes for students are good. Most success rates on GCE AS programmes are around the national average. At GCE A level, success rates are high and they improved in 2008/09 in all English subjects. In 2008/09 the majority of subjects had 100% pass rates. The proportion of students achieving high grades is low in several subjects but initiatives in this area are starting to have impact. The progress of students in relation to their prior attainment is satisfactory.
- Students develop good skills in both English and modern foreign languages. In English, students confidently discuss linguistic techniques and terminology. In modern foreign languages students develop good oral skills. Most students are confident in their responses and some demonstrate good acquisition of a wide range of vocabulary and good pronunciation. New vocabulary, grammatical structures and key terms are reinforced through discussion, in presentations, or through the use of examples.
- Teachers are supportive and encouraging in their responses to students, promoting a positive learning experience. Teachers give praise in recognition of students' contributions and they respond sympathetically to errors, including inaccurate pronunciation or use of grammar in foreign languages. As a result, students contribute willingly during lessons. In some lessons students also demonstrate curiosity and a wider interest.
- Teaching and learning are good. In the best lessons teachers plan a good variety of activities and approaches to suit the learning needs of individuals. They ask challenging questions. Lesson activities are well paced and lively, involving students actively in group work or engaging them in use of the interactive whiteboard. Students have good opportunities to learn from one another and many produce creative and imaginative work. In less effective lessons most activities are led by the teacher and students do not have sufficient opportunities to take an active role in their learning.
- Feedback to students on their written work is satisfactory. Work is usually closely annotated, with positive points noted and inaccurate spellings or use of grammar highlighted. However, in the majority of cases there is no reference in the body of the students' work to identify the achievement of specific

assessment criteria. Feedback from teachers is usually very supportive and constructive but it does not include specific targets for improvement.

- Opportunities to take part in subject-related enrichment are variable. Languages students benefit from exchanges to France, Germany or Spain. However, enrichment opportunities for English students are insufficient. A few visiting speakers come into the college and there is a creative writing group. The students who participate in this benefit from having their work published in an attractive anthology, with awards for the best entries. However, only a relatively small number of students are involved in this activity.
- Students benefit from good opportunities resulting from partnerships with local schools and other organisations. They act as 'ambassadors' at open evenings, and some help in English taster lessons. Several students also take advantage of the 'Passport' scheme offered by Teesside University. Students on modern foreign languages courses work with schools in the Redcar and Cleveland area to promote languages to pupils through the 'Lads into Languages' and 'Girls Go Global' projects.
- Students demonstrate good awareness of the importance of equality and diversity. English and modern foreign languages courses cover many themes relating to equality and diversity, including feminism, the use of language and stereotypes, and a range of social and cultural topics. The resources used in a tutorial in relation to careers guidance emphasised the college's commitment to confidential advice, ensuring equality of opportunity and removing potential barriers to progression.
- Leadership and management are satisfactory. All teachers are involved in completing course reviews, and there is a well-conceived template which encourages reflective practice. Staff set targets as part of this process and these targets are usually challenging but realistic. However, some judgements in the 2008/09 self-assessment report were over-optimistic, particularly in relation to the performance of some subjects against the national average. There has been a lack of rigour in the analysis of data but the use of data is starting to become more robust. Some actions to address areas for improvement are not specific or measurable.
- Actions taken to improve the quality of provision have started to have an impact but are not yet fully embedded. Good practice is found in both English and modern foreign languages in relation to teaching, learning and assessment. Teachers share resources with one another but there are insufficient opportunities for more formal sharing of ideas between teams or across subjects. The department has recognised this and has started to implement ways of sharing good practice.

What does Prior Pursglove College need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that activities in lessons focus on learning, taking into account the needs of individual students, and that within marked work there are explicit links to assessment criteria to assist students in reaching their full potential.

- Develop further opportunities for subject-related enrichment for students on English courses.
- Increase the formal opportunities to share the good practice that exists, both within teams and across subjects.
- Ensure that self-assessment judgements based on analysis of the performance of subjects are robust and that actions identified to promote improvement are specific and measurable.

## Business, administration and law

Grade 3

### Context

40. Currently there are 468 enrolments in business, administration and law, with the majority on GCE AS and A-level courses and a small number on BTEC provision. There are 62 enrolments in accounting and finance, 187 in business studies and 206 in law. Most are full-time students aged 16 to 18. In addition, 13 part-time adult students are taking NVQ business administration as part of the college's adult learner responsive and learndirect provision.

### Key findings

- Achievements are good on GCE A-level programmes. Success rates are outstanding on GCE A-level accounts, applied business double award and law. Pass rates are also high on GCE A-level business studies and applied business single award. However, retention rates have declined on the single award to below the national average. Students on GCE A-level programmes overall make the progress expected from their prior attainment.
- Success rates are low and below the national average on GCSE applied business and on the majority of GCE AS courses. Retention rates are low on GCSE applied business and GCE AS accounts, while pass rates are poor on GCE AS business studies and law. Achievement of high grades across programmes overall is close to the national average.
- The majority of students make good progress in developing subject knowledge, relevant workplace skills, and personal and social skills. Students on the BTEC national award in personal and business finance improve successfully their workplace skills through a programme of mentoring workshops and work placements in local businesses.
- Teaching and learning are good. Teachers use their subject knowledge well, and in the best lessons they use a wide range of teaching and learning activities and supporting materials which engage students. Effective use is made of information and communication technology to promote and support learning; for example, through the inclusion of up-to-date case studies on the college intranet. Students are also encouraged to develop their independent research skills.
- In some lessons teachers do not plan activities which are sufficiently well tailored to individual students' needs, and some teaching lacks challenge and inspiration.
- Assessment procedures are appropriately organised and managed. Verbal feedback is positive and constructive and written work is marked accurately and promptly. In a small minority of cases feedback is too general and does not give adequate guidance on what students need to do to improve their work or to achieve higher grades.

- A range of programmes is offered at advanced level, most of them being full-time courses at GCE AS and A level. In addition to these awards, there is a GCSE intermediate course in applied business, and provision is further enhanced by BTEC national awards in law and in personal business and finance. The programme of enrichment activities is good on law courses and on the BTEC national award in personal business and finance.
- The college has established a highly successful career academy as part of a national initiative to develop partnerships between schools, colleges, local businesses and young people, and good links have been made with the local community through the Young Enterprise programme.
- Care, guidance and support for students are good. Tutors offer effective personal support, both academic and pastoral, and students speak highly of the advice and guidance that they receive through academic workshops. However, additional support for students in the completion of tasks or in the development of personal and social skills is not always sufficient to ensure that they make the progress expected of them.
- Leadership and management are satisfactory. Managers provide a clear focus and direction, promote high standards and set clear targets for improvement, although it is too early to see the full impact of recent initiatives by course teams. Self-assessment reports are well structured but not always rigorous in their analysis and evaluation.
- Accurate and up-to-date management information is used to monitor course performance. However, staff do not yet make sufficient use of the college's management information to monitor and evaluate students' performance and attainment levels.
- Appropriate arrangements are in place to safeguard and protect all students and managers and staff understand their roles and responsibilities in relation to equality and diversity. There is some inconsistency in the promotion of equality and diversity across subject areas.

#### What does Prior Pursglove College need to do to improve further?

- Implement fully appropriate strategies to address low and declining success rates on GCSE and GCE AS courses.
- Ensure that all lessons have sufficient content, pace and challenge, and that teachers use an appropriate range of differentiated activities which are tailored to the needs of students.
- Develop greater consistency, clarity and depth in written feedback to help students to improve the standard of their work, attain their learning goals, and make progress.
- Ensure that the additional support which is provided is timely and effective, and further improve the impact of workshops.
- Introduce greater rigour and consistency in the analysis of course performance and self-assessment and in the use of management information.

## Information about the inspection

41. Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and six additional inspectors, assisted by the college's vice principal, as nominee, carried out the inspection. Inspectors also took account of the college's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, comments from the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC), the previous inspection report, reports from the inspectorate's quality monitoring inspection, and data on learners and their achievement over the period since the previous inspection.
42. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and emails. They looked at questionnaires learners and employers had recently completed on behalf of the college. They also observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. Inspectors collected evidence from programmes in each of the subject areas the college offers.

**Record of Main Findings (RMF)**  
**Prior Pursglove College**

Learning types: 14 – 16: Young apprenticeships; Diplomas; 16-18 Learner responsive: FE full- and part-time courses, Foundation learning tier, including Entry to Employment; 19+ responsive: FE full- and part-time courses; Employer responsive: Train to Gain, apprenticeships

Grades using the 4 point scale 1: Outstanding; 2: Good; 3: Satisfactory; 4: Inadequate	Overall	14-16	16-18 Learner responsive	19+ Learner responsive	Employer responsive
Approximate number of enrolled learners					
Full-time learners	1585		1550	35	
Part-time learners	1115	5	120	920	70
Overall effectiveness	2	2	2	2	2
Capacity to improve	2				
Outcomes for learners	2	2	2	2	2
How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?	2				
How well do learners attain their learning goals?	2				
How well do learners progress?	2				
How well do learners improve their economic and social well-being through learning and development?	2				
How safe do learners feel?	2				
Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well being?*	2				
How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*	1				
Quality of provision	2	2	2	2	2
How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development?	2				
How effectively does the provision meet the needs and interests of users?	2				
How well partnerships with schools, employers, community groups and others lead to benefits for learners?	1				
How effective are the care, guidance and support learners receive in helping them to achieve?	2				
Leadership and management	2	2	2	2	2
How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?	2				
How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?*	2				
How effectively does the provider promote the safeguarding of learners?	2				
How effectively does the provider actively promote equality and diversity, tackle discrimination and narrow the achievement gap?	2				
How effectively does the provider engage with users to support and promote improvement?	2				
How effectively does self-assessment improve the quality of the provision and outcomes for learners?	2				
How efficiently and effectively does the provider use its available resources to secure value for money?	2				

\*where applicable to the type of provision



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