

Prestwich Arts College

Heys Road, Prestwich, Manchester M25 1JZ

Inspection dates

8–9 May 2019

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Pupils have not benefited from a good quality of education for far too long. Despite a slight improvement in 2018, pupils' achievement in a range of subjects continues to be weak.
- Leaders and governors have not acted quickly enough to bring about improvement across the school. Their monitoring processes to check on the quality of education are ineffective.
- Leaders have not ensured that all staff share their vision for improving the school. This and a lack of urgency from leaders and staff mean that the rate of improvement since the previous inspection has been too slow.
- Teachers do not use accurate assessment information to plan learning that meets the needs of pupils. Consequently, much work lacks challenge. This is particularly true for most-able pupils and disadvantaged pupils.
- Some teachers do not apply school policies effectively. Their expectations of pupils' behaviour are too low. Teachers do not give pupils clear information on how to improve their work.
- The curriculum does not meet the needs of pupils. As a result, pupils make less progress than they should across a range of subjects.
- Attendance is lower than the national average and the proportion of pupils who are regularly absent from school is too high. This is particularly so for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
- The proportion of pupils who are excluded from school is much higher than the national average. This is particularly true for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND.
- A number of pupils do not manage their own behaviour well. Their antisocial behaviour, including some bullying, upsets other pupils and disrupts learning.
- Leaders' information about pupils' progress does not reflect the work in pupils' books. Consequently, leaders have an overgenerous view of the impact of their actions on bringing about improvement.

The school has the following strengths

- Since the arrival of the headteacher, clear lines of accountability for school improvement have been put firmly in place.
- Pupils' achievement is better in some subjects, for example English and humanities, due to stronger teaching.
- Careers education, information and guidance (CEIAG) help pupils to access further education, training or employment.
- Safeguarding is effective. Pupils feel safe in school.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- As a matter of urgency, improve the impact of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - leaders ensure that staff support and understand the vision for school improvement
 - monitoring processes enable leaders to gain an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses
 - development planning is precise and based on an accurate evaluation of the school's most pressing weaknesses
 - teachers' assessments of pupils' progress are accurate and provide leaders with reliable information about academic outcomes
 - there is a broad and balanced curriculum, built on high expectations and challenge, that meets the needs of different groups of pupils.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that pupils make the progress of which they are capable, particularly in mathematics, science and modern foreign languages, by ensuring that teachers:
 - raise their expectations of what pupils should achieve for their ages and starting points
 - use accurate assessment to plan teaching that builds on pupils' prior learning and challenges pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils and most-able pupils
 - apply school policies effectively so that they provide pupils with feedback that helps them to know how to improve their work.
- Improve pupils' behaviour by:
 - reducing the proportion of pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND, who are regularly absent from school
 - reducing the proportion of pupils excluded from school by providing appropriate support for those who cannot manage their own behaviour
 - ensuring that teachers follow the behaviour policy to reinforce high expectations of pupils' behaviour
 - dealing effectively with bullying so that pupils are confident to seek help and incidents decline.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- This school has not provided pupils with a good quality of education for some time. A lack of urgency in tackling areas for improvement, coupled with weaknesses in governance, means that the school's effectiveness has declined further since the previous inspection. Inadequate teaching has led to pupils' weak achievement across a range of subjects. The standard of education at Prestwich is not acceptable.
- The headteacher, who took up post in September 2017, immediately started to plan for improvement. During this process, the extent of the school's endemic weaknesses became much clearer. There was far more to do than had originally been assumed. As a result, strategies to secure school improvement did not get off to the quick start that the headteacher had wished for. In part, this accounts for the apparent slow pace of change.
- There has been considerable change since the arrival of the headteacher. For example, there is a new senior leadership team who are keen to bring about improvement. A clear structure has been established to hold staff to account for the pupils in their care. New policies and practices are in place to improve pupils' behaviour, as well as the quality of teaching and learning. However, some teachers do not apply these policies consistently and this is a stumbling block to moving the school forward.
- Leaders have not ensured that all staff share or support their vision for improvement or their sense of urgency to ensure that pupils achieve well. This has been a barrier to success. A lack of shared responsibility for improving the school has contributed to the slow pace of change. Despite some signs of recovery emerging, recent improvements are at the very early stages of development and are therefore not fully embedded. In some areas, such as behaviour, signs of improvement are barely discernible. Leaders are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the required improvement at this school.
- Senior leaders have systems in place to help them to evaluate the impact of their actions. However, these monitoring processes have not been effective in identifying abiding weaknesses in teaching and pupils' behaviour and achievement. As a result, leaders have an overly optimistic view of the rate of improvement in the school. Furthermore, their generous view of the school's effectiveness means that plans for future improvement are not firmly aimed at tackling the school's most pressing weaknesses.
- The curriculum is not shaped well enough to meet the needs of different groups of pupils. The delivery of the curriculum has not been effective in making sure that pupils learn what they need to know. This is because it has lacked challenge and is not built on high expectations of pupils' achievement. Many pupils have failed to make good progress in certain subjects, often because they have gaps in their knowledge due to weaknesses in the curriculum offer and in the quality of teaching. School leaders have recognised that the current curriculum provision is not good enough. They have taken steps to ensure that, in the future, the curriculum will be more appropriate to the needs, abilities and interests of pupils. However, it is too early to test if their good intentions will bear fruit.

- Leaders and governors have not used the pupil premium funding effectively. Disadvantaged pupils' progress has been weak for some time. While there has been some improvement, the progress of disadvantaged pupils remains well below that of other pupils nationally. A review of pupil premium funding has recently been carried out but this has had no impact so far on those pupils currently at the school.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is delivered through the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) lessons. During PSHE time, pupils are given the opportunity to consider current issues through discussion and debate. Leaders adapt the curriculum to cover national, local and school issues as they arise. Consequently, pupils are able to reflect on their own values and beliefs. Extra-curricular opportunities help to broaden pupils' horizons and understanding of cultural differences. This helps them to be prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Given the weaknesses in the school, leaders may only appoint newly qualified teachers in humanities and English.

Governance of the school

- The governing body has been ineffective for some time. It has not held leaders to account for the quality of education that pupils receive. As a result, the standard of education has declined since the last inspection.
- Over the last year, there have been considerable changes to the governing body. There is a new chair and vice-chair. The governors have undertaken training provided by the local authority and are now well equipped to undertake their roles. It is for this reason that a review of governance is not recommended.
- Governors are becoming more knowledgeable and are beginning to hold leaders to account with increasing rigour. They understand the issues that face the school. However, like leaders, they have an overly optimistic view of the improvement that has been brought about to date.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- All appropriate checks are in place to ensure that only adults who are safe to work with children are employed by the school. There is frequent and appropriate training provided to all staff and governors on safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty. Consequently, staff are able to spot the signs of children at risk.
- Leaders have developed links with appropriate agencies to provide help in a timely manner for those pupils who need it.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- School leaders have tried to tackle weaknesses in teaching and, since the previous inspection, there have been many changes in staffing. However, the scale of the problem was greater than initially envisaged and poor teaching continues to have a detrimental impact on the progress of many pupils.

- Typically, teachers' expectations of what their pupils can achieve are too low. However, in Ofsted's staff questionnaire, nearly all of the staff who responded said that they felt that pupils were being challenged in their learning. This demonstrates that teachers do not have an accurate understanding of the standard of work that their pupils should be completing for their age and ability.
- In many subjects, including mathematics, science and modern foreign languages, teachers do not use assessment information effectively to ensure that pupils' learning builds on what they already know and can do. As a result, pupils make less progress than they should.
- Teachers check with each other whether their assessments of pupils' work are accurate to ensure consistent practice. However, because of teachers' low expectations, these assessments are often inflated. As a result, there is a disconnect between the information that leaders have gathered about pupils' progress and the quality of learning seen in pupils' books. Leaders therefore share teachers' overgenerous view of the progress that pupils are making, particularly at key stage 3.
- Some teachers do not follow agreed policies for teaching and learning, including the school's marking and feedback policy. As a result, pupils are unsure how to improve their work.
- Some subjects do provide pupils with plenty of challenge. For example, in English and history, pupils make strong gains in their learning because these subjects are taught effectively. However, this is not the case in most subjects, where too much time is spent on work that is often too easy for pupils.
- The school has become overly dependent on temporary teachers. These staff are not supported effectively and they struggle to manage pupils' behaviour. As a result, pupils' progress is held back.
- Teachers' low expectations extend to the quality and presentation of pupils' work. They accept work that is of a poor standard, untidily presented and frequently incomplete, particularly from boys.
- Leaders have introduced a pupil 'passport' for all pupils with SEND. The passport contains information about the specific needs of the pupils, together with strategies that help them to learn. As a result, teachers are able to provide better support in the classroom. Pupils with SEND are beginning to make better progress than they have in the past. However, this improvement is very recent so the impact is limited.
- At key stage 4, pupils are unable to access the learning that they need due to gaps in their knowledge from their time spent in key stage 3. Consequently, there is much ground to make up to enable these pupils to become successful in their learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Inadequate

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe in school. This view was supported by the parents and carers that responded on Parent View. However, some pupils told

inspectors that bullying does happen in school. Some said that it is dealt with effectively by staff and the bullying stops as a result. Other pupils, particularly some older pupils, felt that bullying did not get sorted out by staff and further instances of bullying ensue. These pupils said that, as a result, they do not bother reporting such incidents anymore.

- There is a comprehensive programme of study for pupils' personal development and welfare. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe and healthy. They explained the dangers of social networking online and the actions they could take to keep themselves safe. They talked confidently about the importance of equality and personal freedom.
- The quality of CEIAG has improved considerably. Leaders are making rapid progress towards meeting the government's benchmarks for careers provision. They have made good links with a variety of businesses and organisations so that pupils benefit from work experience. Pupils get appropriate careers information that allows them to make informed choices as they prepare for their next steps in education.
- Leaders use alternative provision effectively to support pupils who have difficulties in school. Leaders have created strong relationships with these providers. They check regularly with providers to ensure that pupils are safe and making good progress.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is inadequate.
- Overall, pupils' attendance is well below the national average. The proportion of pupils who are regularly absent from school is considerably higher than the national average, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND. The appointment of a new attendance officer is beginning to show some improvement to pupils' rates of attendance. Currently, this improvement is tentative and fragile, with little evidence that it will be sustained.
- The proportion of pupils who have been excluded from school for a fixed period increased considerably in 2018, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND. For the current year, this looks to be improving slightly. Nonetheless, currently, the proportion of pupils excluded for a fixed period is approximately four times the national average.
- Despite a slow reduction in the proportion of pupils who are permanently excluded from school, these figures remain well above the national average.
- Teachers told inspectors that internal truancy is an issue. They say that there are often pupils on the corridors during lessons. These pupils do not follow teachers' instructions and often cause disruption to learning in the classrooms.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are weak overall. Where teaching is not strong, pupils sometimes move off-task and low-level disruption results in pupils making less progress than they should. Sometimes, teachers do not use the behaviour policy effectively to stop this behaviour. As a result, a number of pupils' books show that work is not finished. It is sometimes missing completely.
- There are times when some pupils' behaviour during social times is not good. Pupils, particularly older pupils, do not regulate their own behaviour appropriately. Pupils told inspectors that there were often fights, both in and out of school. Some pupils also said

they disliked visiting the toilets during social times due to the antisocial behaviour of other pupils in there.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Pupils have underachieved across a range of subjects for a number of years. Overall, pupils' attainment dropped considerably in 2017. Despite showing some improvement in 2018, the proportion that attained a grade 4 or above in both English and mathematics was well below the national average. However, the proportion of pupils that gained the full suite of English Baccalaureate subjects at grade 4 or above was in line with the national average.
- Pupils' progress has followed a similar pattern. Despite some improvement in 2018, pupils continue to make progress well below the national average across a range of subjects, particularly mathematics, sciences and languages.
- Some groups of pupils have made progress below the national average for a number of years. For example, most-able pupils make progress that is half a grade lower than their peers nationally. Despite some improvement in 2018, disadvantaged pupils continue to make much weaker progress than that of other pupils nationally.
- In 2018, published results demonstrated that there had been some improvement. For example, disadvantaged pupils made better progress than they had done previously, although the gap between their progress and that of other pupils nationally remained too great.
- Pupils with SEND have also underperformed considerably over time, despite a slight improvement in the 2018 published information.
- Current pupils in Year 11 are making progress in line with their counterparts last year. This indicates that the school's trajectory of improvement has faltered and pupils are still not making the progress of which they are capable.
- Current pupils' work does not demonstrate that they are making the progress that they should across a range of subjects. In key stage 3, inspectors saw pupils repeatedly relearning work that they had already mastered, sometimes in primary school.
- Most-able pupils continue to underachieve by the end of Year 11. Low challenge during their learning means that they often make weak progress and attain standards that are lower than their peers nationally.
- Leaders' assessment information does not reflect the standard of learning that inspectors saw in pupils' books. As a result, leaders have an inflated view of the proportions of pupils who are making good progress. This is particularly true for pupils in key stage 3.
- Leaders have worked on more clearly identifying the needs of pupils with SEND when they join the school. This has led to an improvement in the progress of those pupils with SEND currently in Years 7 and 8. These pupils are making greater progress than hitherto across a range of subjects. This is not the case in Years 9, 10 and 11, where pupils with SEND continue to make weak progress because they have not had the benefit of these recent improvements.

- Improvements to CEIAG ensure that pupils are given high-quality advice on their next steps after their GCSE examinations. As a result, the proportion of pupils who move on to high-quality education, employment and training has increased steadily over the last few years.

School details

Unique reference number	105362
Local authority	Bury
Inspection number	10087817

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

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	861
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Eamonn O'Brien
Headteacher	Rachel Evans
Telephone number	0161 773 2052
Website	www.prestwich.bury.sch.uk
Email address	Prestwich@bury.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	18–19 October 2016

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is higher than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is higher than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is in line with the national average.
- Leaders use a number of alternative providers to support pupils: Leo Kelly Centre, Canterbury Centre, Bury College and Head Start Academy.
- Since the previous inspection, a new headteacher has been appointed and took up post in September 2017.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning across a range of subjects, including joint observations with school leaders.
- Alongside school leaders, inspectors formally scrutinised pupils' work from Years 7, 8, 9 and 10 across a range of subjects. They also looked at pupils' work when observing teaching and learning.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior leaders. Inspectors spoke with a group of curriculum leaders, teachers and non-teaching staff.
- Inspectors met formally with groups of pupils from Years 7, 8, 9 and 10. Inspectors also spoke with pupils informally during social times.
- An inspector spoke with six members of the governing body, including the chair and the two vice-chairs. An inspector also spoke with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors examined a range of documentation, including school policies, safeguarding procedures, leaders' self-evaluation and the school's improvement plan.
- Inspectors considered the 28 responses to the pupils' survey, the 46 responses to the online staff questionnaire, the 56 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and the 24 free-text responses from parents.

Inspection team

Erica Sharman, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Dean Logan	Ofsted Inspector
Jan Rowney	Ofsted Inspector
Julie Bather	Ofsted Inspector

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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. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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