

Inspection of Colne Primet Academy

Dent Street, Colne, Lancashire BB8 8JF

Inspection dates: 28 and 29 November 2023, and 1 and 2 February 2024

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Requires improvement
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Requires improvement
Previous inspection grade	Good

The headteacher of this school is Julia Pilkington. The school is part of the Pendle Education Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Anita Ghidotti-Gibson, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Rob Pheasey.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Colne Primet Academy are strong advocates for their school. They championed the improvements that the school has made to pupils' behaviour. This is helping pupils to enjoy being part of a refreshed culture where, typically, they feel happy and safe.

Pupils are keen to make Colne Primet Academy a warm and friendly place. They learn to build positive relationships with each other and with staff. However, a minority of pupils do not show positive attitudes towards their learning. Added to this, some pupils do not attend school as regularly as they should.

Many pupils, including some pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL), join the school part way through the academic year. Some of these pupils have had negative experiences of education in the past. The school has readily welcomed these pupils, irrespective of their backgrounds or academic starting points, into its community. These pupils spoke proudly of their accomplishments since joining the school.

The school has considerably raised its expectations of what pupils can and should achieve. Pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged, are achieving better than they have in the past. However, an unevenness in the delivery of the curriculum, coupled with the poor attendance of a few pupils, hinders the achievement of some pupils.

The school is fiercely committed to encouraging pupils' wider development beyond the academic curriculum. For example, through the 'Pendle Education Trust Pledge', pupils participate in opportunities designed to develop their personal traits, community responsibilities and global awareness.

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

Following the COVID-19 pandemic, the trust accurately identified that the school's systems to promote positive behaviour and to nurture academic success needed strengthening. As a result, those responsible for governance have bolstered the leadership capacity across the school. This has made a positive difference to pupils' behaviour and to the quality of education that they receive. However, pupils' successes, relative to their starting points, and when they joined the school, are not reflected in the most recent published outcomes.

The school is passionate about supporting pupils to overcome disadvantage and to remove any barriers to their success. To this end, the school ensures that pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), study a suitably broad and ambitious curriculum. The curriculums in most subjects have been overhauled so that pupils learn a well-defined body of subject knowledge. These subject curriculums identify what pupils should learn and when this content should be taught.

Most staff have strong subject knowledge. Many of these staff use their expertise to explain subject matter with clarity and to provide suitable learning activities for pupils. However, some staff lack the confidence to design learning that supports pupils to learn the specific knowledge in the curriculum well. This hinders some pupils from building a rich body of subject knowledge.

Alongside developments to the curriculum, the school has implemented an effective approach to check that pupils' earlier learning is secure. In some subjects, staff use assessment strategies sufficiently well to identify and address pupils' misconceptions. However, in other subjects, staff are honing their understanding of how to best use these assessment systems to check what pupils know and remember. This means that some staff introduce new knowledge before pupils are ready.

The school accurately identifies weaknesses in pupils' reading knowledge. Pupils, particularly those in key stage 3, who are at the earlier stages of learning to read receive appropriate additional support from well-trained staff. Many of these pupils have made considerable gains in their reading knowledge. However, some older pupils have not benefited from the same effective support. Some of these pupils do not read as well as they should, which sometimes affects how well they learn across the wider curriculum.

The school identifies the additional needs of pupils with SEND effectively. The school is aspirational for these pupils. Staff receive appropriate information and guidance about how to meet the needs of pupils with SEND successfully. Nevertheless, weaknesses in some aspects of curriculum delivery mean that some of these pupils do not achieve as well as they should.

The school has supported staff to gain the knowledge and confidence to promote appropriate standards of conduct from pupils. Staff reward positive behaviour and challenge poor behaviour with fairness and consistency. Many pupils behave appropriately in lessons. Even so, a minority of pupils do not concentrate on their learning as well as they should. Occasionally, this distracts other pupils.

The school has ensured that attendance is a high priority. This focus, together with a well-thought-out approach, has improved the rates of attendance of many pupils. However, despite the school's efforts, the attendance of a few pupils remains low.

Pupils benefit from a wealth of age-appropriate opportunities to develop their understanding of themselves, others and the world beyond their school. The school ensures that pupils recognise what it means to be a respectful citizen, make responsible choices and to develop healthy relationships.

A well-connected range of opportunities supports pupils to make informed choices about the next steps in their education, employment or training. Many pupils, including those who speak EAL, experience success at Colne Primet Academy. These pupils progress on to aspirational courses that set them up well for their future lives.

In its work to improve the quality of education, the school is mindful of staff workload. Staff told inspectors that they appreciate the support that the school provides for them to develop their subject-specific expertise and practice.

The trust and members of the local academy council work together to ensure that they have a comprehensive understanding of the school's priorities for improvement. They offer suitable challenge and support to the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some staff do not choose the most appropriate pedagogical approaches to deliver the curriculum effectively. This means that some pupils, including some with SEND, do not build their knowledge as well as they should. The school should ensure that staff have the necessary skills and confidence to deliver subject curriculums successfully.
- In some subjects, staff do not use the school's assessment strategies sufficiently well to identify and address pupils' misconceptions quickly enough. Some pupils develop gaps in their knowledge as a result. The school should ensure that, in these subjects, teachers are fully equipped to determine and remedy gaps in pupils' knowledge before introducing new learning.
- Some older pupils do not read as well as they should. This hinders how well these pupils access the wider curriculum. The school should ensure that these pupils are supported well to catch up quickly with their reading knowledge.
- Some pupils do not attend school as regularly as they should. These pupils miss out on important learning and all that the school has to offer. The school should ensure that it addresses the barriers to these pupils' attendance.
- A minority of pupils do not have sufficiently positive attitudes to learning. This impacts negatively on their achievement and, occasionally, disrupts others. The school should ensure that these pupils develop suitably positive attitudes so that they learn as well as they should.

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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	139130
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10290224
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	877
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Rob Pheasey
CEO of the trust	Anita Ghidotti-Gibson
Principal	Julia Pilkington
Website	www.colneprimet.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	17 and 18 May 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Colne Primet Academy is part of The Pendle Education Trust, a local multi-academy trust.
- The school makes use of four registered alternative providers to provide full-time education for a small number of pupils.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 11 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. An additional visit was made to the school on 1 and 2 February 2024 to gather additional evidence.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the principal and other senior leaders. They met with representatives of the multi-academy trust, including the CEO, and with those responsible for local governance. Inspectors also met with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science, history and modern foreign languages. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in class and around the school site. They also scrutinised the school's behaviour and attendance records.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils from all year groups and considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for pupils.
- Inspectors held discussions with staff and considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.

Inspection team

Michael Pennington, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
David Roberts	Ofsted Inspector
Sharon Asquith	Ofsted Inspector
Will Smith	Ofsted Inspector
Rachel Goodwin, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Rebecca Sharples	His Majesty's Inspector

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