



Preston Manor High School

Inspection report

**Better
education
and care**

Unique Reference Number 101567
LEA Brent LEA

Inspection number 276541
Inspection dates 16 - 17 November 2005
Reporting inspector Ms Jennifer Smith HMI

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

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|-----------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|
| Type of School | comprehensive | School address | Carlton Avenue East Wembley |
| School category | foundation | | HA9 8NA |
| Age range of pupils | 11-19 | | |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed | Telephone number | 02083854040 |
| Number on roll | 1360 | Fax number | 02089082607 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body | Chair of governors | Mrs Sandra Bennett |
| Date of previous inspection | October 2000 | Headteacher | Mrs Andrea Berkeley |

| Age group | Published | Reference no |
|-----------|------------------|--------------|
| 11-19 | 12 December 2005 | 276541 |

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Preston Manor High School is a larger than average 11-19 comprehensive school. The present school roll is 1360, with a large and growing 6th form. Students come from ethnically diverse backgrounds. Increasingly, over the last few years, there have been slightly more boys than girls. About two thirds of its students come from Asian backgrounds and a fifth from Black Caribbean and African backgrounds. A high percentage of students do not have English as a home language but few are at an early stage of learning English. The number of students with learning difficulties and disabilities is broadly in line with the national picture but above the national average number of students have a statement of special educational need. A small percentage of students come from refugee backgrounds and a number of students are in the care of the local authority. Just over a fifth of students are entitled to free school meals; this is above the national average. Mobility in and out of the school is generally low. The school acquired specialist status in science and mathematics in 2002 and leading edge status in 2003. A city learning centre is attached to the school.

Key for inspection grades

| | |
|---------|--------------|
| Grade 1 | Outstanding |
| Grade 2 | Good |
| Grade 3 | Satisfactory |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate |

Overall effectiveness of the school

Preston Manor is an outstanding school, which enables its students to learn well. The headteacher, ably supported by the senior leadership team, provides exceptional leadership and she has a very clear vision for the future. It is a forward thinking school.

Students enter the school with average attainment but by the time they leave in the sixth form they achieve standards that are well above the national average overall. The staff are very committed to their students and the level of care and support shown to them is outstanding. Students with learning difficulties and disabilities are very well supported. Over the past five years the school has invested considerable time in developing a range of initiatives aimed at improving the teaching and learning. These include the acquisition of specialist science status, the provision of a very effective literacy programme and a strong focus on the achievement of black African Caribbean boys, amongst many others. The school has also contributed well to the wider educational development of neighbouring schools with its outreach work. The school ensures a safe environment in which to work. The professional development of staff is given a very high priority.

A determined focus on raising standards and improving teaching, especially in creating a challenge for all, has been central to the school's development plan and to its self-evaluation. The senior leadership team have an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and its overall effectiveness. There is a well defined strategy for bringing about further improvements for example, in assessment strategies, in improving standards in drama, physical education and geography and in extending provision for the work related curriculum. Governors provide very good support and an effective challenge to the headteacher. They also use their own professional skills and expertise well, for example, in ensuring effective reforms of the staffing structure. The school's finances are competently managed and the school provides very good value for money. The majority of parents believe their sons and daughters enjoy school. Issues identified in the last inspection report relating to teaching and learning have been dealt with thoroughly. The robust strategies the school has in place to raise standards still higher, gives every confidence that this school has a strong capacity for continued improvement.

Grade: 1

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Students achieve very well because of the high quality education they receive. They attend regularly, so retention rates on courses are high resulting in outstanding progress. Advice, guidance and support are excellent. Students are individually tutored about what to study and firmly mentored if efforts waver. In turn, in their role as peer mentor, they help others settle into sixth form life making the transition from Year 11 smooth.

A significant number of students gain places at high ranking universities and colleges. The school is aware of the need to widen the range of vocational courses and is actively seeking to enhance this provision and extend ways of tracking performance in the sixth form.

Grade: 1

What the school should do to improve further

In order to improve standards and students' progress even further, the headteacher and governors should:

* ensure that the work related curriculum and vocational opportunities for students aged 14-19 are developed further in order to provide a relevant curriculum to a wider range of students.

* improve teachers' classroom management skills in the small number of lessons where behaviour is not good enough to maintain a rapid pace in learning.

Achievement and standards

The school judges standards and achievement as outstanding. Inspectors found that progress students make and the standards they reach are very good overall. They are outstanding in English language and literature, mathematics, modern languages, history and religious education. Standards achieved have improved consistently over recent years. The school has identified that students do not achieve the same very high standards in geography, physical education and drama and are seeking to address this.

The majority of students enter the school with average standards. Between Years 7 and 9 students make very good progress and this is maintained through to Year 11 so that when they take national tests and in GCSEs, students consistently make very good progress in relation to local and national averages. In 2005, the best GCSE results were in media, mathematics, German and history and nearly seventy two per cent of Year 11 Students gained 5 GCSEs at the highest grades, well above the national average.

Students in the sixth form achieve excellent results, well above the national average, with a steady upward trend over the past 4 years. In 2005 the highest advanced level results were in mathematics, physics, chemistry, media and history.

Staff are committed to ensuring that all students achieve as well as they can and students often exceed their targets. Students who are at an early stage of learning English and refugees also make good progress. Robust monitoring ensures early identification of underachievement of individuals and groups. These students benefit from intervention programmes that utilise a range of staff expertise, often working in partnership with families. The school has been successful in raising the achievement of black African Caribbean boys by addressing their learning and social needs. Students with learning difficulties and disabilities make very good progress as a result of the support they receive.

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being

The school judges itself to be good in this area of school life; inspectors found it to be outstanding.

The school is rich in the diversity of language, religion and culture that students, parents and staff bring. Within this community students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development thrives. Attitudes to learning, attendance and behaviour are, nearly always, very good. Students feel very safe and are very confident about confiding in staff should they need to. Most students report that they enjoy lessons. They support each other well in their learning and listen with interest to the views of others.

Students are given many opportunities to take responsibility and to develop team and leadership skills. The well established school council gives students an influential voice in making decisions. For example, students who persistently misbehave are asked to meet with a special panel of the council to discuss their actions and are encouraged to improve. With pride a member confidently described the council's involvement in appointing the librarian, in observing teaching and giving feedback to the teacher. They also have special training in managing meetings. The chairman reported that, 'We give students a voice and collectively, teachers and students, have made the school better.'

Major contributions are made by sixth form students as they too, sharpen skills needed for their future economic well being. They mentor and support vulnerable peers, accept responsibility for younger students and work with the elderly in the community. Students readily participate in charity work. They have initiated changes towards healthy eating; many enjoying sport through a fitness programme linked to healthy living.

Grade: 1

Teaching and learning

The inspection confirms the school's judgement that the quality of teaching and learning is good overall and outstanding in the sixth form.

Consistently, teachers' very high expectations of what students can do and their skills in managing learning ensure that lessons have pace and drive. They use very effective strategies to improve literacy across a range of subjects and provide students with opportunities to work individually and in collaboration with others, creating lessons that are interesting and motivating; some of them outstandingly so. Lessons are well planned and organised and very effective use is made of the interactive whiteboards, involving students in their learning. As one Year 7 student said, 'When you learn about something you never knew...it's really great.'

The quality of teaching in the sixth form is generally outstanding. Sixth formers comment about their teachers, 'We are young adults and relate well to our teachers, there is a special relationship without doubt.' This was exemplified in a history lesson where students' responses to their teacher's questioning about ideology were impressive. Whilst, in another lesson, where students were preparing for university interviews, they were extremely articulate in a role play activity, which they then self criticised.

Teachers' high expectations are based on a clear understanding of their students' needs. For example, in English, groups of students are taught together for half a term in order to target particular skills. This ensures that all students, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities as well as those who are gifted and talented, make good progress. However, a small minority of teachers need to ensure that more able students are always provided with sufficient challenge for example in geography, drama and physical education. In a few lessons, students' behaviour impedes their learning by slowing the pace of the lesson. More commonly, teachers use a range of strategies to ensure that students behave well and as a result, students enjoy their lessons. They learn together well, assessing each others' work and collaborating on problem-solving activities, for example in science and mathematics.

Students use a wide range of technical vocabulary appropriately, which adds considerably to the rigour of the learning. Teachers often use skilful questioning techniques, where students are encouraged to make extended contributions to classroom discussion. This supportive atmosphere is common to many lessons. For example, in an English lesson, the dynamic teaching style and probing questioning enabled pupils to analyse a difficult text in detail, exploring challenging concepts. Similarly, in a German lesson, pupils needed no encouragement to take part confidently in oral work, with boys pleasingly taking part in rapid responses as frequently as the girls. Excellent relationships between teachers and students characterised many lesson seen.

Grade: 2

Curriculum and other activities

The inspection team agrees with the school that the curriculum provision is good. It has a strong academic focus, reflects its specialist school status but meets the needs of the students. Students have a broad curriculum from Years 7 to 11. At the end of Year 9 students have a very wide choice of subjects to choose from, including a valuable course aimed at students with particular learning difficulties. Efforts are made to fit in minority subjects, sometimes by extending the school day, such as Latin in Years 7 to 9 and link college courses for Years 10 and 11. Work-related learning is beginning to be co-ordinated across the school and applied GCSEs are being introduced, this is an area under development.

Through teaching emotional literacy, personal social and health education and multicultural education, the school has become a harmonious community. The school has often been in the forefront of curriculum innovation, particularly in its approaches to literacy and strategies for managing behaviour, enabling students to make good progress in lessons and having a significant impact on standards.

There is a rich and varied range of extra-curricular activities that meets the needs of all groups in the school, from American football, drama, an orchestra to GCSE courses in community languages. ICT clubs provide some students with their only access to computers outside school.

In the sixth form, the curriculum is strong. Qualifications are largely advanced level GCEs with interesting enrichment courses and personal social and health education. There are also opportunities to link with sixth forms in neighbouring schools. The retention rate of students through to the end of Year 13 is very good.

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support

The school evaluates its quality of care, guidance and support in the sixth form as outstanding, and in the main school as good. The inspection judges that it is outstanding throughout the school. It has a significant impact on students' personal development and well-being and on their high achievement.

The exceptionally good co-ordination between staff ensures that students' capabilities, aptitudes and progress are well known by teachers. The re-designation of heads of year as directors of student development has led to a fuller view of students' academic and pastoral needs and changed the role of form tutors, enabling better guidance to be given. Support for vulnerable children is very good. All avenues are explored to make sure that it is an inclusive school. The school has a national reputation for its work with raising the self-esteem and achievement of African Caribbean boys. Other innovative and preventative schemes such as the Bullying Panel and training in emotional literacy, give staff different avenues for action. Students reported that bullying is rare and when it does occur it is dealt with promptly and with proper care.

Induction is good both for Year 7 students and newcomers, including refugees. Very good records are kept and communicated effectively to all staff, so that students can be tracked individually. Students are set academic targets and have regular meetings with staff about these. Students with learning difficulties or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language are very well supported.

The school provides a safe haven in an area of considerable social deprivation. Tutors are effective. One Year 11 student has said, `This tutor group is like a family.` Child protection measures are fully in place. Sixth form students talk glowingly about the good relationships between staff and students and feel they can ask for advice freely. Careers advice is good, expectations are high and preparation for higher education is very good indeed.

Grade: 1

Leadership and management

The headteacher's leadership of the school is outstanding, providing exceptional direction for the school. She is supported extremely well by the deputy headteachers and other members of the senior leadership team. Staff at all levels focus on improving the achievement of all students and promote their well being in an outstandingly caring community. The headteacher's vision that every child matters is well established. As a result the school pursues many initiatives which raise the quality of the teaching and learning and promote students' personal development and well being. The initiative to raise the achievement of Black African Caribbean boys has been very well thought through, meticulous in planning and is beginning to bear fruit, for example in the confidence and participation of this group of students in modern foreign languages oral work. Similarly, the literacy strategy started several years ago has had a major impact on students' achievement and underpins the continual rise in standards in the school.

Professional development is seen as a priority and an expectation for all teachers. It is very well matched to rigorous performance management and the biennial department reviews. The senior leadership group change their

responsibilities over time, providing them with a variety of experiences and enabling them to be a thoroughly reflective team.

The quality of the school's self evaluation is rigorous and perceptive, providing an effective link to the school's development plan. This identifies sharply the priorities for development that are then pursued in a determined way to improve provision and raise standards. Departmental plans appropriately reflect whole school priorities ensuring that all subject areas focus on these key aims.

The governors know the schools' strengths and areas for development well and provide expert advice, support and challenge to the school. They have set up a 'think tank', rather than having numerous committees to provide an effective sounding board for new ideas and solutions to issues facing the school. Resources are well deployed and used, however, some of the buildings are now in need of upgrading, not least the school dining hall.

The leadership and management of the school have successfully continued to improve all areas of school life in recent years, particularly by developing a considerable number of initiatives that are proving successful in raising achievement. It is to the credit of the school that one comment from a member of staff summed up these developments by saying, 'Initiatives don't come across as change, its more like progression.'

Grade: 1

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Inspection Judgements

| | | |
|---|----------------|-------|
| Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate | School Overall | 16-19 |
|---|----------------|-------|

Overall effectiveness

| | | |
|---|-----|-----|
| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 1 | 1 |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners well-being? | 2 | 2 |
| The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage | NA | |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 1 | 1 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | Yes | Yes |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection | Yes | Yes |

Achievement and standards

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| How well do learners achieve? | 2 | 2 |
| The standards reached by learners | 2 | 1 |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variation between groups of learners | 2 | 2 |
| How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress | 2 | |

Personal Development

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners? | 1 | 1 |
| The extent of learners spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 1 | |
| The behaviour of learners | 2 | |
| The attendance of learners | 2 | |
| How well learners enjoy their education | 1 | |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 2 | |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles | 1 | |
| The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community | 2 | |
| How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well being | 2 | |

The quality of provision

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners needs? | 2 | 2 |
| How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners? | 1 | 1 |
| How well are the learners cared for, guided and supported? | 1 | 1 |

Leadership and management

| | | |
|---|-----|-----|
| How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners? | 1 | 1 |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education? | 2 | |
| How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review | 1 | |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can | 1 | |
| How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money | 2 | |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities | 2 | |
| The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected | Yes | Yes |
| Does this school require special measures? | No | Yes |
| Does this school require a notice to improve? | No | Yes |

Annex A

| | |
|--|------------------|
| The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy | Judgement |
| Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily. | Yes |
| Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise. | Yes |
| Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse. | Yes |
| Learners are educated about sexual health. | Yes |
| The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe. | Judgement |
| Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements. | Yes |
| Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place. | Yes |
| Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism. | Yes |
| Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them. | Yes |
| The extent to which learners make a positive contribution. | Judgement |
| Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships. | Yes |
| Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them. | Yes |
| Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community. | Yes |
| The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being | Judgement |
| There is provision to promote learners' basic skills. | Yes |
| Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams. | Yes |
| Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in Key Stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form. | Yes |
| Education for all learners aged 14-19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy. | Yes |

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Preston Manor High School
Carlton Avenue East
Wembley
HA9 8NA

9 December 2005

Dear Students

On behalf of the inspectors and myself who visited your school recently, I would like to thank you for the polite and helpful way you welcomed us. We enjoyed discussing the work you were doing and looking at the progress you were making in school. You talked enthusiastically about your school and we hope you will take the time with your parents or carers to read the full report. We thought you might like a summary of the inspection findings.

Your school provides you with an excellent education. The majority of lessons were good and some were outstanding. We were pleased that most of you try very hard in lessons, achieving considerable success. You nearly always behave well in lessons and you tell us that you enjoy coming to school, which we think is shown by your excellent attendance. Your teachers take exceptionally good care of you and guide you well in your choice of courses in Year 9 and Year 11. You are also provided with very good support if you have learning difficulties. The sixth form is thriving and is a real strength of your school; we hope you will all aspire to become members of the sixth form when the time comes. We were pleased that nearly all sixth formers complete their courses and that most go on to university or college.

You take pride in the responsibilities that you have been given, for example, the school council and prefect duties. We were very impressed with the particular responsibility you take in helping your fellow students to get back on track when they have done something wrong. You are provided with a wide range of after school clubs and activities in which you keenly participate. We hope that you will continue to take advantage of these excellent opportunities.

We have asked your teachers to continue with curriculum developments to provide more work related opportunities and vocational courses for you. We also would like to see behaviour improved in the small minority of lessons where it was holding back your progress. We feel that you can help in this respect, by ensuring that you are always attentive and well behaved in those lessons. We would like the school to help you achieve even higher standards in geography, physical education and drama.

We wish you all success for your studies in the future.

Yours sincerely,

Jennifer Smith

Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools