Inspection of Pinc College

Inspection dates:	17 to 19 June 2025

Overall effectiveness	**Good**
The quality of education	**Good**
Behaviour and attitudes	**Good**
Personal development	**Good**
Leadership and management	**Good**
Provision for learners with high needs	**Good**
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this provider

Pinc College is an independent specialist college for young people aged 16 to 25 who are neurodiverse and have faced significant barriers to education or training. Students follow art and digital art curriculums that include vocational qualifications, GCSEs and/or functional skills qualifications in English and mathematics. Students also develop their personal and social skills and participate in work experience. The college has recently introduced supported internships to enable students to gain paid employment.

Pinc College enables vulnerable students to learn in unique environments, such as museums and other arts and cultural heritage sites across the North West, the West Midlands, and Yorkshire, with one site in Cardiff.

At the time of the inspection, there were 188 students based across 13 sites and 17 supported interns who had work placements with local employers. All students had an education, health and care (EHC) plan.

What is it like to be a learner with this provider?

Students enjoy studying at Pinc College. They develop their artistic and creative skills and behaviours that they need to prepare for their next steps. Students benefit from a supportive and respectful environment which helps them to build their confidence and self-esteem.

Most students find their work demanding and challenging. The unique cultural environments in which they study inspire them to develop their artistic skills. They collaborate with artists and creators to gain valuable insights into genres of art, which enhances their understanding of the creative industries. Students participate in projects and work experiences which include the curation of exhibitions and the organisation of prestigious events.

Staff work with students to develop their professional behaviours and ensure they are ready for work. They are mindful of students' previous negative experiences in education and encourage students to make a fresh start. However, the attendance of a small number of students is too low, which prevents them from participating fully in their learning.

Students feel safe. Staff create a respectful, inclusive and nurturing culture which promotes positive lifestyles, and they care for students' emotional and physical well-being. Students know who to speak to if they are worried and have access to both internal and external support services.

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

Leaders are ambitious for their students. They ensure that students have access to creative arts education in inspiring and culturally unique settings. Leaders are determined that their students achieve success, both in their academic and personal lives. Students develop a wide range of skills. They are motivated and work enthusiastically in the venues in which they study.

Staff identify and use students' starting points well. They use their expertise in working with students who have EHC plans, and their industry knowledge, to devise individualised curriculums. They gather information from the students, their parents and other professionals and share it so that all staff clearly understand each student's needs before they start their study. As a result, teachers and support staff ensure all programmes focus on students' interests and long-term goals.

Students benefit from highly trained and knowledgeable staff who have experience collaborating with students with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff enable students to develop strategies to thrive in their studies and gain professional skills that are necessary for employment and further education. Students articulate what they have learned and how they have developed their art skills for each piece of work in their portfolios.

Teachers use questioning and feedback effectively to support students to improve. They ask meaningful questions to evaluate students' level of understanding and sensitively provide targeted support as needed. As a result, students identify the gaps in their own knowledge and recognise how they can improve their work to develop new artistic skills.

Students are proud of their achievements and can confidently explain the creative processes that they have developed. They discuss how they can use colour to highlight emotions in photography and how textured materials add depth and contrast to their art. Students produce high-quality work, which they exhibit alongside other artists in the galleries in which they study.

Students successfully achieve their personal and EHC plan outcomes based on their starting points. However, while achievement rates in creative subjects have improved following an examination board re-moderation of results from the summer of 2024, they remain low. Leaders have carefully considered the barriers faced by their students and the reasons for the low rates of achievement, such as the high levels of examination anxiety that students experience. As a result, they have implemented a new portfolio-based curriculum. Students are making good progress in producing high-quality artwork for their portfolios, but it is too soon to see the impact of these curriculum changes.

Leaders and managers have developed a personal development curriculum which enables those with SEND to navigate the world around them. The curriculum focuses on equipping learners with the knowledge, skills and behaviours that are required to lead independent, safe and healthy lives. Staff have prioritised key areas, such as online safety, self-awareness, and self-advocacy.

Teachers encourage students to consider career opportunities from the start of their studies. They meet with specialist careers advisers to plan their next steps. Leaders have recently developed a supported internship pathway to enable students to experience and apply for jobs in the creative arts. Although employers and supported interns have provided positive initial feedback about the internship, it is too early to assess the success of this programme.

Leaders have taken decisive action to tackle the areas that need to improve. Recently, they have reorganised management structures to better support the different centres and to ensure that the quality of education is consistently good. Leaders accept that they must continue to build upon the improvements that they have made, to ensure that all students achieve and progress.

Leaders have strengthened their board by inviting new governors to join and to support and challenge managers on the strategic and operational plans of the college as it expands. Governors now have greater expertise in the areas of SEND, further education and finance. However, information provided to governors does not yet sufficiently focus on the improvements required to the quality of education.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Ensure that the quality of education is consistently good at all centres of learning.
- Make sure that action taken to improve achievement rates for all qualifications is successful and sustainable.
- Increase students' attendance.

Provider details

Unique reference number	149344
Address	Oxford Road Manchester Greater Manchester M13 9PL
Contact number	01616 670910
Website	www.pinccollege.ac.uk
Principal, CEO or equivalent	Rachel Newman
Provider type	Independent specialist college
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the regional college lead, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. The inspection was carried out using the further education and skills inspection handbook and took into account all relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors collected a wide range of evidence to inform judgements, including visiting learning sessions, scrutinising learners' work, seeking the views of learners, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

Inspection team

Steve Kelly, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Angie Fisher	Ofsted Inspector
Lisa Duncalf	Ofsted Inspector
Kay Hedges	Ofsted Inspector

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