

# Burford School and Community College

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	123235
<b>Local authority</b>	Oxfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	380627
<b>Inspection dates</b>	1–2 February 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Judith Rundle HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11-18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1146
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	181
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Andrew Pitman
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Kathryn Haig
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	28-29 January 2009
<b>School address</b>	Cheltenham Road Burford OX18 4PL
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## Introduction

Inspection team

Miss J Rundle	Her Majesty's Inspector
Mrs T Briggs	Additional inspector
Mr J Clark	Additional inspector
Mr K Harrison	Additional inspector
Mr C King	Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 33 teachers teaching 35 lessons, of which seven were joint observations with senior or middle leaders, and paid short visits to a further 23 lessons. In addition, the inspection team made visits to a year assembly and registration groups. Inspectors took account of the responses to the questionnaires in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at a number of documents, including the school's self-evaluation, monitoring and evaluation records and development plan, safeguarding policies and a sample of teachers' assessments and planning. Meetings were held with five groups of students, representatives of the governing body and school staff, including senior and middle managers. Inspectors conducted an analysis of 120 questionnaires returned by parents and carers and others completed by students and staff.

## Information about the school

Burford School is slightly larger than most secondary schools with more boys than girls on the roll. It has boarding provision which will be inspected independently of this inspection. The school serves a mixture of urban and rural communities, with significant numbers from isolated areas. Most students are of White British heritage. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is significantly below average. The proportion of students supported through school action is below average although the proportion supported through school action plus and/or with a statement of special educational needs is in line with averages. The school meets the current floor standard. The school has links with a local college to provide alternative provision for students completing vocational courses. Governors were awarded the Governor Mark in 2011.

## Inspection judgements

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>

## Key findings

- This is a good school. The headteacher provides a very strong lead and is unafraid to tackle difficult issues to bring about improvement. Aply supported by reorganised senior and middle leadership teams, she has created an ethos of collaboration between staff and ambition for students' achievement. Students, parents, carers and staff are overwhelmingly positive about the school and its work.
- The sixth form is good, although some variation remains in students' attainment across subjects and between students in Years 12 and 13.
- Students' achievement by the end of Key Stage 4 has been on an improving trend since the last inspection and is significantly above average in most areas, and well above current floor targets. Students develop their literacy, communication and numeracy skills effectively across the curriculum.
- The quality of teaching is good overall. However, the quality of teachers' oral feedback varies and assessment information about individual students is not always used to inform planning.
- The behaviour of students is good in lessons and when they move around the large school site. They arrive punctually at lessons, reflecting their positive attitudes to learning. Students enjoy being in school. Some parents and carers expressed concerns over behaviour, but students and staff say it is mainly good and students are confident that staff deal with any incidents effectively. Attendance is above average and there are few exclusions.
- The roles and responsibilities of senior and middle managers are clearly defined. Effective procedures are in place to monitor and improve students' achievement, although systems for the monitoring and evaluation of teaching are yet to be fully embedded. Governors are knowledgeable about the work of the school. They are supportive and constructively challenging and pay good attention to ensuring the safety of students.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Help teachers to make all learning outstanding by:
  - ensuring that they consistently use targets in oral feedback during lessons so that all students know precisely what they need to do next
  - ensuring that assessment information is used consistently so all planning

- meets the needs of different abilities within one class
- embedding existing systems for the monitoring and evaluation of teaching.

## **Main report**

### **Achievement of pupils**

Attainment is consistently significantly above average. At GCSE, a high proportion of students attain the higher A\* or A grades in a broad range of subjects, although their performance in science in 2011 was below average. Following robust intervention by senior leaders, the work seen in lessons and results from module examinations indicate that students' progress in science has accelerated and that most are on track to make well-above-expected progress by the end of the year and to attain well-above-average results. Achievement in the sixth form is in line with the national average although there is a variation in attainment across subjects at AS level and between students in Years 12 and 13. Students throughout the school show determination and ambition, persevering to improve their work in lessons and through homework. They want to succeed.

All students, including disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and those known to be eligible for free school meals, generally make good progress overall during their time at the school. Students use their well-developed vocabulary and speaking and listening skills during discussions and to articulate in-depth responses to questions. They all have good access to the curriculum because of their good reading skills. Mathematics is a strength across the school and students are able to transfer and use their knowledge between subjects well. Students identified for school action plus support do not always make the progress they should when work is not planned and adapted to meet their specific needs.

The use of assessment has been revised and information is used effectively to identify students who are underachieving against targets. Intervention programmes and additional learning sessions enable them to make better progress and most attain their ambitious targets. Most parents and carers, and all students, recognise the good progress being made. Work seen in lessons and the school's own data show that students of all ages are on track to attain or exceed national averages.

### **Quality of teaching**

The quality of teaching is good overall, and is never less than good in the sixth form, enabling current students to learn rapidly and achieve well. Staff have strong subject knowledge which most use effectively to extend students' knowledge and understanding of a subject, to question students to extend their initial responses and to develop their higher-order thinking skills. For example, in one highly successful Year 11 English lesson the pace of learning was rapid because the teacher used a broad range of techniques, questions and texts which engaged and motivated the students. The teacher's excellent subject knowledge, careful observation and skilful questioning ensured students used their homework and previous learning to present their arguments and debate their merits. They worked cooperatively in small groups

and were unafraid to ask questions of the teacher and each other to further their knowledge. Most staff observe, question and give pertinent feedback which deepens students' understanding and shows them their next steps in learning. However, not all teachers understand how to promote outstanding learning in their lessons so, at times, their expectations are not high enough, particularly of lower-ability students. The deployment of teaching assistants has been strengthened and they provide good support for groups or individual students within departments.

All students know their targets for improvement over time and most teachers employ the school's marking system to identify students' strengths and future targets. However, verbal feedback in lessons is not always precise enough to enable all students to know what they need to do next. The revised assessment procedures are helping teachers and leaders to analyse progress more effectively and managers to hold staff to account for the progress of students in their classes. However not all teachers use this information to plan work that consistently matches the needs of students with different abilities in one class.

Relationships between staff and students are productive. Students work well together in lessons and listen respectfully to each other's input. The curriculum enables students to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural knowledge well. For example, in design and technology students explore the impact of the use of different materials in different cultures and in geography students explore their beliefs and values related to global warming. Parents, carers and students are overwhelmingly positive about the quality of teaching in the school.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Around a third of the 120 parents and carers who returned a questionnaire expressed concerns about lessons being disrupted by bad behaviour. However, inspectors found that students behave well in lessons and when they move around the school. Expectations of behaviour are high across the school and students respond positively. Most students and staff say that this good behaviour is typical. Occasionally, small groups of students drift off task in lessons but this tends to be when work is not challenging enough. Leaders employ a range of strategies, including a counsellor and the Bridge, to support students who start to misbehave or who feel affected by misbehaviour. These measures have a positive and immediate impact with few repeat instances. Attendance is above the national average and there are very few students excluded. The vast majority of students want to be in school and learn. This is reflected in all students being in education, employment or training when they leave the school.

Students are polite, courteous and take good care of each other. Almost all say they feel safe in school and parents and carers agree. The school completes an annual Every Child Matters survey and leaders work with student representatives to tackle any identified issues; for example, they have swiftly eliminated previous 'no-go' areas. However, the school sometimes misses the opportunity to communicate these improvements to parents and carers. A good programme of personal, social and health education ensures a good focus on personal safety, drug and alcohol awareness and refusal skills. Students say that bullying of any kind is rare and are confident that adults deal with any issues effectively.

## Leadership and management

There is a shared ambition for the school driven by the headteacher and supported extremely well by leaders at all levels and the governing body. Leaders set challenging, yet realistic targets for departments and individual students. Secure systems are in place which have brought about improvements in the quality of teaching and increased the rate of students' progress in recent years. However these systems are yet to be embedded securely across all departments to ensure consistently good and outstanding teaching. Leaders are aware of this and have taken robust steps to tackle underperformance and to bring greater consistency to teaching across the school. The strengthened roles, accountability and expectations of middle managers, together with regular and rigorous monitoring and department and key stage reviews, are producing a sharper focus on students' achievement. At times, the monitoring is based mainly on attainment and not sufficiently on students' progress.

Senior leaders and governors know the strengths and weaknesses of the school because of the quality of monitoring and evaluation and improvement planning. Partnerships with other local schools and the local authority enhance the process further through regular opportunities to cross-moderate judgements. Good opportunities exist for the development of managers and the professional development of all staff. Staff are particularly enthusiastic about the opportunities to share and develop good practice across subjects through the teaching and learning communities. The school's capacity to improve is good because of the improvements brought about in recent years. It has been strengthened further through the restructuring of the leadership team and its members' responsibilities.

The governing body has a positive impact on the work of the school, recognised with the recent award of the Governor Mark. Governors are well informed; they provide support and challenge the school constructively. Secure procedures are in place to ensure the safeguarding of students and staff. Leaders and governors successfully promote equality of opportunity and work closely with parents and carers to overcome any barriers to learning.

The curriculum is good because it supports students' outcomes well and has an appropriate emphasis on improving students' literacy and numeracy. Opportunities have been increased to meet the needs and interests of students, particularly in the sixth form, including the introduction of more vocational courses. As a result of good teaching, improving attainment and better curriculum choices, retention rates have steadily increased between Years 12 and 13. There is a high take-up of extra-curricular activities across all age groups, including in the sixth form. Provision for the students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.



## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



3 February 2012

Dear Students

### **Inspection of Burford School and Community College, Oxford OX18 4PL**

Thank you for your help and for talking to us during the recent inspection. We thoroughly enjoyed meeting you and seeing your work. I am writing to tell you about our findings.

Your school provides you with a good education. It has brought about improvements in your achievement since the last inspection. The headteacher and other leaders provide a strong lead that is raising your aspirations and the expectations of your teachers. You are very positive about the school and its work although you told us that some lessons are better than others. You and your parents or carers raised some concerns about behaviour, but inspectors found it to be good. You told us you feel safe and well cared for at school. You experience mostly good teaching and consequently you make good progress and attain results that are well above the national average.

We have asked the school to make sure all teaching is as good as the best by:

- using targets consistently in oral feedback so you know clearly what to do next
- using what teachers know about you to make sure all lessons meet your needs
- helping all teachers to find ways of making your learning outstanding.

All of you can certainly help by responding to teachers' comments and using the feedback that they give you to improve your learning and attainment.

We wish you well in your future endeavours.

Yours sincerely

Judith Rundle  
Her Majesty's Inspector

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