

# Burscough Priory Science College

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	119746
<b>Local Authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	358618
<b>Inspection dates</b>	16–17 February 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Ruth James 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>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	720
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Mike Forshaw
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Douglas Bruce
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	2 July 2008
<b>School address</b>	Trevor Road Burscough, Ormskirk Lancashire L40 7RZ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01704 893259
<b>Fax number</b>	01704 893307
<b>Email address</b>	head@bpsc.co.uk

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. There were 32 lessons observed, and the same number of teachers seen. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, members of the governing body and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at assessment data, school policies and safeguarding documentation. An analysis of 203 questionnaires from parents and carers was also examined.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas

- the current progress of different groups of students
- the quality of teaching and learning, especially in subjects with weaker outcomes, such as English
- the appropriateness of the curriculum, especially for boys and those at risk of underachievement
- the effectiveness of the school's improvement planning.

## Information about the school

Burscough Priory Science College is smaller than the average secondary school. It is situated in the town of Burscough, but draws from a catchment extending beyond the town. The proportion of students who are known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The percentage of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is well below the national average. The proportion who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is just below average, but the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is above average. The school has specialist status in science. It has the Sportsmark award, Healthy Schools status and Investors in People status.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

This is a satisfactory and improving school. Students achieve well in science and modern foreign languages, but examination results are broadly average overall. This represents satisfactory learning and progress given students' starting points. Ambitious leadership by the headteacher is now promoting a culture of improvement, although the full impact of this has yet to be realised in academic outcomes. Central to this improvement are high-quality data systems that inform well-targeted improvement strategies. Students are benefiting from the closer monitoring that ensures they are now starting to make better progress. The school recognises the need to raise standards further at Key Stage 4 and most recent assessments and modular results indicate that the school may be on course to achieve significant improvements in performance in 2011. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Some good lessons were seen, but there is still too little outstanding teaching. There remain some inconsistencies both within and across departments. Teachers do not always make enough use of the wealth of assessment data available to ensure that the work set is appropriate for the full range of abilities in the class and the quality of marking is a weakness.

Students enjoy school and their behaviour in lessons and around the site is good and often exemplary. The school's efforts to raise attendance levels have proved to be very effective, resulting in high levels of attendance and a substantial reduction in the number of persistent absentees. The curriculum, although satisfactory, has few vocational options at Key Stage 4 and limited provision for information and communication technology (ICT). The science specialism makes a positive contribution, both in terms of results and curriculum enrichment. A strong feature of the school's recent improvement is the new 'Every Child Matters' centre which is designed to focus on those whose circumstances make them most vulnerable and at risk of not achieving their potential. Combined with a restructuring of pastoral support arrangements, this is ensuring that care, guidance and support are now good. There is particularly effective leadership by the headteacher and increasing confidence among other leaders. Middle leaders are now more empowered and are responding to the challenges with strategies to improve teaching and raise attainment in their departments. Self-evaluation is broadly accurate and the school is aware of what still needs to be done. The school provides satisfactory value for money. Given the notable improvements in attendance, accelerating rates of progress, and much stronger systems for support, it has a good capacity to improve further.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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

- Accelerate learning and progress so that attainment is raised.

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- Increase the proportion of outstanding and good teaching and learning further by:
  - - improving the consistency of teaching within and across departments
  - - ensuring that lessons are planned carefully to take account of the needs of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities
  - - making better use of assessment information in lessons so that all students are suitably challenged and supported
  - - ensuring that marking in all subjects is regular and gives a clear indication to students of what they need to do to improve.
- Review the curriculum to ensure that it provides a wider range of courses at Key Stage 4 to suit different aptitudes, abilities and aspirations.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****3**

Students join the school in Year 7 with standards that are just above average. By the time they leave at the end of Key Stage 4, attainment is broadly average for most measures, including the proportion gaining five or more GCSE A\* to C grades including English and mathematics. Results were better in 2009 than 2010, but this was largely related to the higher ability of the cohort. Data which takes account of prior attainment and contextual factors show that the 2010 cohort made slightly better progress than in 2009, but it remained satisfactory. Girls did better than boys in 2010. Students achieve well in science and modern foreign languages. Recent targeted intervention strategies are showing signs of having a positive impact on learning and progress. Module and other examination results and school assessment data indicate that results may be on track to improve significantly in 2011.

Observations of lessons support the school's view that rates of progress are accelerating. Students' positive attitudes are a significant contributor to the very good climate for learning that exists in most classrooms. Engagement in the lessons observed during the inspection was typically good. Students settle readily to the tasks set and work diligently and conscientiously. However, teachers do not always capitalise sufficiently on this willingness and responsiveness so that the pace of learning is not yet rapid enough to secure good progress over time. Students identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar progress to their peers.

Behaviour is good both in lessons and around the school. Exclusions are low. Attendance is high as a result of concerted efforts by the school. Students accept additional responsibilities in school readily. Examples of students' contribution to the wider community include making collections for charities and the good links with primary schools promoted by the science specialism. Students, increasingly, adopt healthy lifestyles and take advantage of a broad range of sports provision. Students report that they feel very safe in school. Where incidents of bullying occur, they are dealt with quickly and effectively. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good with particular strengths in social and moral development.

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*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	1
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

## How effective is the provision?

Although teaching is satisfactory overall, over half the lessons observed were good. This reflects the recent support and training for teachers, but it has yet to have an impact on longer-term improved academic results. Inspection evidence supports the school's view that the quality of teaching is improving, including the teaching of English. Most teachers have strong subject knowledge. In better lessons, teachers make good use of strategies to engage students and give them more ownership of their own learning. Good use is made of group work and mini whiteboards to help engage students and to help teachers assess progress and lessons are generally delivered at a brisk pace. Teachers make good use of ICT in their presentations and, generally, make lessons interesting. However, these strengths are not found consistently and there is variation both within departments, including in science, and across departments. Although examples of varied activities to meet the needs of students of different abilities were seen, there was a lot of whole-class teaching which did not challenge the most-able or support the less-able, especially in some mixed-ability classes. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities are identified on lesson plans, but there is little evidence, either in planning or teaching, of strategies to meet their specific needs in mainstream lessons. Adult support in lessons for students who struggle with their learning is not used sufficiently to maximise potential. Although a new marking policy has recently been introduced, it is not yet embedded and there are inconsistencies in the quality of the marking of students' work. Some books are not marked regularly and, in those that are, there are few examples of constructive

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comments on individual progress or indicators of the next steps in the students' learning. Homework practices are also inconsistent and some students receive very little.

The curriculum offers a satisfactory range of courses at Key Stage 4, largely based on GCSEs. A vocational qualification in science is available. A very small number of students attend further education colleges and other providers for vocational options, but timetabling arrangements mean that they miss lessons in some of their school-based subjects. ICT opportunities are too limited. The school is undertaking a review of the curriculum and is aware that it did not meet all students' needs in 2010, which affected the progress of a few students, especially boys. Extra-curricular activities, especially sports, make a valuable contribution and activities through the science specialism enhance this further.

Care, guidance and support are strengths. The pastoral care system has been restructured to provide better continuity year-on-year, but form-tutor time is not always used productively. The introduction of the 'Every Child Matters' centre is a success. It provides a calm atmosphere and is aimed at removing barriers to learning and employing coherent, intervention strategies which help promote students' self-confidence and self-belief. Students speak very highly of the centre staff and several parents and carers also expressed their appreciation of its work.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The new headteacher is leading the school well. He has established a clear intention to improve outcomes for students and has successfully marshalled the support of the governing body, the senior leadership team, middle leaders and staff. The school's self-evaluation provides an accurate analysis of the school's current position. The revised senior leadership structure and the clear roles and responsibilities are leading to improvements in a range of areas. The new pastoral system, supported by the 'Every Child Matters' centre, has strengthened care and support for students and sharpened opportunities for intervention where students need specific help and guidance. Significant improvements in attendance are the result of exemplary management. The developing data and tracking system is providing better information, enabling underachievement to be identified and support and intervention strategies to be planned. Local authority support has been valuable for senior and middle leaders who are responding positively to the changes and welcome strongly the opportunities to contribute more to whole-school development. While all the signs are encouraging, it is too soon to judge their effect on

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outcomes. Development and action planning is of variable quality, lacking detail and clear timescales and success criteria, especially with regard to teaching and learning.

The school's contribution to community cohesion is good and the school itself is a friendly and supportive community where students and adults show mutual respect. The local community is involved through charitable work and primary links. The national and international dimensions are less well developed, but European trips are a feature. Equal opportunities are promoted satisfactorily. School data suggest that the gap between boys and girls evident in 2010 has reduced. Although it is not yet fully evident in lessons, there is increasing awareness of the needs of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Safeguarding arrangements are satisfactory. Government requirements are met and staff have had appropriate training.

The governing body is now effective in holding the school to account, because of training they have undertaken in the use of data and the amount of information which is made available to them. Much valuable work is delivered through committees and governors have a detailed knowledge of many aspects of the school's work.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Views of parents and carers

Most parents and carers were very supportive of the school. However, several commented on the variation in the quality of teaching across the school, especially in science. Lunchtime arrangements which result in long queues were also mentioned by a few parents and carers. A small number reported concerns about lack of homework. Inspection evidence indicated that these are areas that could be improved. Inspection evidence indicated also that the positive comments made by parents and carers about recent improvements in the school were accurate, especially about arrangements for support.



## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Burscough Priory Science College to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 203 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 720 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	60	30	133	66	9	4	1	0
The school keeps my child safe	79	39	120	59	3	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	61	30	128	63	11	5	2	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	56	28	124	61	18	9	2	1
The teaching is good at this school	55	27	124	61	14	7	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	33	16	133	66	29	14	2	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	33	16	135	67	31	15	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	57	28	124	61	6	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	50	25	137	67	9	4	2	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	61	30	117	58	19	9	2	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	45	22	121	60	15	7	1	0
The school is led and managed effectively	83	41	107	53	7	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	74	36	113	56	14	7	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## 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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and 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 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on 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 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:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.

**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.**



25 February 2011

Dear Students

**Inspection of Burscough Priory Science College, Ormskirk, L40 7RZ**

Thank you for the welcome that you gave the inspection team when we visited your school. We were impressed by your good behaviour. Your attendance is excellent. Questionnaires sent in by your parents and carers show that most are pleased with the school. You told us that most of you enjoy school and feel safe.

We found that your school is providing you with a satisfactory education. Some of you told us that the school has improved under the new headteacher and our evidence supported this. The new 'Every Child Matters' centre is very good at providing support, especially for those who have particular needs.

Examination results are broadly average and you do well in science and modern foreign languages. In 2010, English results were not as good as they should have been and boys did not achieve as well as girls. Teaching is satisfactory, enabling you to make satisfactory progress but this is improving. In the better lessons, you respond well to the teachers' high expectations and learn more rapidly, but this is not yet consistent. Although you have a choice of courses at Key Stage 4, this is mainly GCSEs, but ICT options are very limited. Many of you enjoy extra-curricular sports which help you to lead healthy lifestyles.

We have asked the headteacher to continue the work he has begun with the staff to:

- help you make better progress and so gain better qualifications
- make more teaching good or outstanding by ensuring all abilities are catered for, and marking helps you to improve
- provide you with a broader choice of courses at Key Stage 4.

You can help by trying hard in all your work so that you gain the best qualifications that you can which will help you in the future.

Yours sincerely

Ruth James

Her Majesty's Inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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