

Priesthorpe School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108087
Local Authority	Leeds
Inspection number	356304
Inspection dates	29–30 March 2011
Reporting inspector	John Barnes HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1156
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	185
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr I Featherstone
Headteacher	Mr Kenneth Hall
Date of previous school inspection	24 September 2007
School address	Priesthorpe Lane Farsley, Pudsey West Yorkshire LS28 5SG
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by an additional inspector seconded to Ofsted and four additional inspectors. Inspectors spent the majority of their time observing teaching and learning in 40 lessons, observing the same number of teachers. They held meetings with groups of students, governors and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work and scrutinised documents, including the school's self-evaluation, assessment and safeguarding information, and improvement planning. In addition, 168 questionnaires from parents and carers and those returned by staff and students were analysed.

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

- Levels of attainment and the amount of progress made by students.
- The impact of teaching on raising attainment and progress.
- The effectiveness of teachers' use of assessment information to challenge students and actively involve them in their learning.
- How well leadership and managements at all levels impacts on improving students' achievement

Information about the school

Priesthorpe is a larger-than-average secondary school with provision for post-16 students in the sixth form. Approximately 74% of students are from a White British background. Students from minority ethnic backgrounds are mainly of Indian or Pakistani heritage, and the proportion who speak English as an additional language is well above average. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is average. A below average proportion of students has special educational needs and/or disabilities, and very few have a statement of special educational needs.

The school has specialist status in sport and has Healthy Schools status. It holds a number of awards including Sportsmark, Investors in People and Investors in Pupils.

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

Priesthorpe is a satisfactory school. It has many good or outstanding features and leaders and managers have brought about significant improvements to the outcomes for students. The school has been through a major re-building programme over the last two years but has continued to improve students' attainment throughout and kept the day-to-day management of the school running smoothly. This has been brought about by the commitment and determination of leaders and staff to ensuring that students' needs are met well by the curriculum and that they receive good quality personal and academic support. Parents and students appreciate this caring and inclusive ethos, and the support for learning. One student, typical of many, stated 'We all feel part of the school'.

Examination results in 2010 showed that students' attainment overall has risen considerably. For example, GCSE A* to C results have improved from 53% in 2007 to 75% in 2010, and results including English and mathematics have also improved significantly to just above the national average. Students' progress overall is satisfactory from their broadly average starting points in Year 7. However, too few students make the progress expected of them in mathematics. Achievement in the sixth form is satisfactory. The school recognises the need to raise standards at Key Stage 4 further, particularly in mathematics and science.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall; behaviour in lessons is good and students are keen to do well. Students listen and follow advice, but as yet few are really independent learners. In too many lessons, assessment is not yet used effectively enough to plan work and activities that meet the needs and interests of all students. Students know their current levels and targets, but feedback from teachers does not always inform them exactly how to improve their work. The specialist status in sport has enhanced provision and the curriculum increasingly matches students' needs.

Students have an excellent understanding of how to lead healthy lifestyles as can be seen from their high rates of participation in sporting activities. They are involved in a range of leadership activities including the encouragement of healthy eating in local primary schools. They make a very positive contribution to the life of the school and its outreach to the local community: this work is based on an incisive analysis of need and the promotion of conflict resolution. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, fostered through their involvement in initiatives such as the Warrington Peace Foundation, is excellent.

The headteacher and senior staff have a clear vision for improvement. Data are used more effectively and challenging targets are set. Robust tracking and monitoring systems are established. The school has set in place more rigorous monitoring and evaluating of its performance, but checks on the progress of its many new initiatives are not yet rigorous enough to ensure that they are implemented consistently across all departments. The

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school's capacity for sustained improvement is good because of the notable improvement in achievement over the last few years.

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?

- Improve students' achievement further by raising attainment and accelerating progress, particularly in mathematics.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning, including that in the sixth form, to at least good by:
 - developing and implementing whole-school practice which develops students' independent learning skills
 - ensuring that assessment information is used effectively to match work to students' abilities and learning needs
 - ensuring marking and feedback is consistent in enabling students to see clearly what they have done well and how it could be improved
 - securing greater rigour in the evaluation of teaching and learning at all management levels.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Students enjoy school. They say that they feel very safe in school and that there is always someone to turn to if they have any worries or concerns. Strong relationships promoting good behaviour provide a framework for positive attitudes to learning, so that students make the expected progress in lessons. In the best lessons, students work independently and in groups and pairs, taking responsibility for their own learning. However, in too many lessons there is a limited variety of learning activities to fully promote and develop these skills.

Students' achievements are satisfactory overall with particular strengths in English, business studies and geography. Students identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar progress to that of their peers. The progress made by those who speak English as an additional language is similar to that of other students. Overall attainment levels are now at or just above national averages, although the number of students achieving two GCSE grades at C or above in science has fallen for two successive years. The school is confident that internal assessment, modular results and coursework indicate that the current Year 11 will achieve as well as expected in all core subjects including science.

Attendance is average and the proportion of students who persistently do not attend school has fallen. The great majority of students leave school with five GCSE qualifications which contribute to their effective preparation for future life. Very few students do not enter further education, employment or training when they leave Year 11. There is a wide range of extra-curricular sporting activities, supported by the specialism and good coverage of health issues in the curriculum. There are also many opportunities to contribute to school life and to take on responsibility; students take up these opportunities

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with great enthusiasm. Students are active fund-raisers and have done much to raise the profile of the school in the community, including the refurbishment of a local café. All groups of students are involved in voluntary work. The celebration of cultural diversity and opportunities in religious studies lessons to relate personal values to ethical issues contribute significantly to students' strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	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
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

¹ 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?

Teaching and learning are satisfactory with some good features. Inspectors saw some examples of good and outstanding practice where teachers used extensive subject knowledge to actively engage students and provide exciting and challenging learning. However, in the majority of observations, students' involvement was more limited and there were fewer opportunities to develop learning points actively. Key factors in these lessons are slow pace with extended teacher-input, lengthy whole-class question-and-answer sessions and work not well matched to students' ability levels. The quality of marking and written feedback is variable across the school and students are not consistently given clear information about what they have achieved and what they need to do next to improve.

The school's curriculum has been adapted and has evolved to better fit students' interests and needs. It provides a good range of academic and vocational courses at Key Stage 4 and a personal learning and thinking skills course at Key Stage 3 is beginning to make

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students less reliant on teachers. 'Nurture' classes provide specific targeted support for those students who find transition to secondary school more difficult. Students and their parents are appreciative of the wide range of after-school clubs and activities, exemplified by one parent who wrote 'Staff should be praised for the efforts they put into after-school activities.' Good care, guidance and support for students are at the heart of the school's ethos. A key strength is the effectiveness of the wide range of support and intervention for potentially vulnerable students and those with additional needs provided by the learning support unit Oasis. The impact of the school's supportive and nurturing approach is evident in students' strong personal development.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The school is led and managed well by a headteacher and leadership team who provide a clear vision for its development and improvement. Leaders and managers are purposefully tackling weaknesses: the school opted to become involved in the Gaining Ground programme and has used it to tackle underachievement in English and mathematics. The development of data analysis and evaluation to inform and target intervention strategies is effective and is being embedded at middle management levels. These systems have been important factors in raising achievement significantly in Year 11 and ensuring good equality of opportunity. Middle leaders say they feel well-supported and held to account in equal measure by their senior colleagues. Senior leaders, however, are aware that currently the monitoring of teaching requires greater rigour. Actions taken by senior managers are not yet feeding through consistently enough to bring about sustained and broad-based improvement in all areas of practice, for example in the use of assessment to support learning. The analysis and use of assessment information by teachers is not yet sharp enough to ensure good levels of challenge for students in all lessons. As a result, too much teaching is satisfactory.

The governing body has a good understanding of the work of the school and provides effective support and challenge. Consequently, it has a clear picture of the school's strengths and relative weaknesses. The school's arrangements for safeguarding students fully meet requirements and are good. Systems are robust and have been enhanced with CCTV and effective text-messaging systems. Parents and carers say that they are well-informed about their children's progress and target review evenings are well-attended. Much effort has resulted in the effective promotion of equal opportunity through support programmes, the curriculum and external support, including strong links with the local special school. The school's extensive range of partnerships, many of them provided through the specialist sport status, enhance the quality of education and care for students.

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The school has an excellent understanding of the nature of its local community and leaders have planned, delivered and evaluated a range of programmes to ensure that it is the hub of a cohesive community. The school's value for money, set against outcomes, is satisfactory.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Sixth form

The overall effectiveness of the sixth form is satisfactory. Results at GCE A-level were broadly in line with the national average in 2010 and students make satisfactory progress. However, attainment on AS courses is below the national average. Teaching in the sixth form is satisfactory. Students work well independently in lessons but do not do so in their own time. The quality of assessment is variable but students receive good feedback on how to improve in BTEC courses. Progression rates from AS level to A-level are satisfactory. Through collaboration with the other two high schools in the consortium, the school has improved the choice of courses on offer to meet the needs of all students more effectively. Lines of accountability across the consortium are now clear and managers have a developing understanding of the sixth form's strengths and weaknesses. A new target-setting system is in place but has not yet had impact on student outcomes. Enrichment activities make a strong contribution to students' personal development.

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These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	3
The quality of provision in the sixth form	3
Leadership and management of the sixth form	3

Views of parents and carers

One hundred and sixty-eight parental and carer questionnaires were completed. These show that the large majority of parents and carers are supportive of the school. They were most positive about how well the school keeps their child safe, how well the school meets their child's particular needs and how well the school makes sure that their child is well-prepared for the future. However, a very small minority expressed concern about how well the school deals with unacceptable behaviour. Parents and carers believe that teaching is good, whereas inspectors judged it to be satisfactory.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Priesthorpe School 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 168 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1156 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	49	29	103	61	13	8	2	1
The school keeps my child safe	56	33	108	64	2	1	1	1
My school informs me about my child's progress	49	29	96	57	18	11	3	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	46	27	106	63	12	7	2	1
The teaching is good at this school	34	20	121	72	6	4	3	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	33	20	104	62	24	14	5	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	33	20	110	65	16	10	4	2
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)	44	26	100	60	9	5	4	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	40	24	115	68	9	5	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	39	23	94	56	22	13	3	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	27	16	103	61	20	12	6	4
The school is led and managed effectively	40	24	112	67	8	5	3	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	62	37	93	55	10	6	3	2

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).

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">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



1 April 2011

Dear students

Inspection of Priesthorpe School, Pudsey, LS28 5SG

Thank you for the warm and friendly welcome that you gave my colleagues and me when we inspected your school this week. The school provides you with a satisfactory standard of education overall and has many very notable strengths.

During your time at school you make satisfactory progress and your examination results are improving but we think they could be better in some subjects. The school gives you good care, guidance and support. Its curriculum meets your needs well and prepares you effectively for your further study and employment. The school's arrangements for keeping you safe are good. This helps you feel very secure and to enjoy school. You make an excellent contribution to your school and community and the way that you get on exceptionally well with each other is impressive.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory but has not yet led you all to make good progress. We have, therefore, agreed some priorities with your headteacher and governors. These are to:

- raise achievement and attainment, particularly in mathematics
- use test results and other assessment information to plan lessons that are more challenging, that allow you to work more independently and that enable you to make better progress
- improve the marking of your work and the quality of the feedback you receive so that you know more clearly what you have done well and how your work could be improved.

You have a very important part to play in this. You can continue to attend school regularly, try your best and strive to be active learners in lessons. We wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

John Barnes

Additional inspector

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