

Priesthorpe School

Priesthorpe Lane, Pudsey, West Yorkshire , LS28 5SG

Inspection dates 29–30 November 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Leaders work well together as a team. They have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and have successfully worked to raise achievement. Students are now achieving well overall.
- Most of the teaching is good and some is outstanding. This is because leaders have concentrated their efforts on improving it. Teachers plan their lessons effectively and they ensure that students know what is expected of them.
- The progress students make is checked regularly. This ensures that any students in Key Stages 3 and 4 are picked up quickly if they are in danger of underachieving. The good progress students make is a significant improvement since the previous inspection.
- Students say the school deals efficiently with any bullying; consequently, it is rare. Students are proud of their school and behaviour is typically good.
- The highly effective leadership of the headteacher and the governing body ensures the school has a clear sense of direction. Staff questionnaires overwhelmingly demonstrate that all share the vision for the future of the school and work tirelessly together to achieve it.
- Most parents praise the work of the school and would recommend the school to others.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- A small amount of teaching requires improvement. Some teachers do not engage students actively in their learning or provide work which meets their needs.
- The sixth form requires improvement. The quality of learning and rates of progress in the sixth form are not as good as elsewhere in the school. Leaders and teachers do not always check progress carefully enough. Consequently, a few students fall behind and this is not picked up quickly enough.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 31 lessons or part-lessons taught by teachers and teaching assistants.
- The headteacher and other senior leaders accompanied the inspectors on a number of visits to lessons, including those in Key Stages 3, 4 and 5.
- Meetings were held with students, members of the governing body, staff and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors took account of the 30 responses to the online Parent View survey and the school's own latest questionnaire for parents. They also took into account the 40 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and examined a range of documents, including the school's own records of pupils' progress and attainment, monitoring documents, records relating to the performance management of staff and those relating to behaviour, safeguarding and attendance.

Inspection team

Glynis Bradley-Peat, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Alan Parkinson	Additional Inspector
Sheila Kaye	Additional Inspector
Robin Fugill	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is larger than the average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of pupils receiving pupil premium funding (additional funding given for looked after children and those known to be eligible for free school meals) is similar to the national average.
- Fewer disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are supported through school action than found nationally. The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is much lower than average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups and who speak English as an additional language is higher than the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Since the previous inspection the headteacher has left the school and a new substantive headteacher is in place. The headteacher started at the school in September 2012.
- Currently, the school does not offer any off-site provision.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently at least good and increase the proportion which is outstanding by:
 - tackling any remaining teaching which requires improvement
 - ensuring that teachers provide activities and materials which are tailored well to meet the needs of individual students
 - creating more frequent opportunities for engaging students more actively in their learning.
- Ensure that students make better progress in the sixth form by:
 - ensuring leaders and teachers monitor progress closely
 - identifying those who are falling behind in their work at an earlier stage and by taking immediate action to help them catch up.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- From below-average starting points in Year 7, students make good progress during their time in the school. By the time they reach Year 11, attainment in GCSE examinations is just above the national average and is improving year on year. The proportion of students who gain A* to C grades in mathematics and English has also increased steadily since the previous inspection. The school has recently reviewed its decision to enter students early for some examinations. More-able students no longer take examinations before the end of Year 11 in order to ensure this group reach the grades of which they are capable.
- The school's own information about students' performance and progress is very reliable and clearly shows that the attainment and progress of current Year 11 students is likely to be better than in the previous year.
- Students enter the sixth form with attainment which is similar to that found nationally. The majority take AS and A level and pass rates are average. Leaders are aware that this aspect of the sixth form requires improvement in order to be good. The reasons behind variable results between subjects have been examined closely. On a variety of other more vocational courses students already make strong progress.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs achieve well overall, although there are some inconsistencies across different year groups. In most lessons teachers plan carefully for their progress and other adults are employed to support learning effectively. However, sometimes activities are not matched well enough to students' needs and progress slows.
- The school is making increasingly good use of the pupil premium funding to provide small-group support and to focus on accelerating their progress. Consequently, those students known to be eligible for free school meals also make good progress and the attainment gap (average point score) between the school and the national figures for this group is closing. This is particularly the case in English where the gap is closing more rapidly. The current gap in the school's own figures is considerably less than it was in 2011.
- Students are encouraged to read and the school's accelerated reader programme is successful in motivating more students to read for pleasure.

The quality of teaching is good

- Students make good progress over time because teaching is typically good. Students themselves report that teaching is good and the vast majority of parents are also happy, although a few state that homework is not always as regular as they would like.
- Most teachers know their subject well and enjoy sharing their knowledge with their students, enabling them to develop their understanding. In a physical education lesson the teacher's outstandingly expert instruction about improving shooting in netball promoted excellent rates of progress, especially amongst some students who found the skill difficult.
- Teaching in the sixth form is also good, reflecting recent improvements in the school to focus on developing classroom practice. However, this is recent and there has not been sufficient time to make an impact on achievement.
- Effective questioning helps students to deepen their understanding. In an effective English lesson in Year 10, good open-ended questions promoted lively discussion about teenage rebellion. Students were sufficiently confident to contribute to the lesson as a result. The teaching assistant ensured that the least able students were able to comment successfully.
- Most teachers have a clear idea of how well their students are doing and, consequently, they provide a variety of tasks and resources to promote learning for a range of different abilities. However, in a few lessons teachers give all students the same work, which results in the more able spending too long marking time and the least able being unable to tackle the work set.

- The quality and frequency of marking varies across different teachers and subjects. Not all teachers provide sufficient advice about how students are to improve their work in the future. In addition, spellings and grammatical mistakes are sometimes left unchecked, which hampers the development of students' literacy skills. However, some good examples of verbal feedback during lessons ensured students knew the next steps to take to make their work better.
- A few teachers do not ensure that students actively participate in lessons. This is because they spend long periods of time talking rather than providing tasks and activities which students can participate in independently.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Students' behaviour around the school site and in the classroom is typically good. This is because teachers' management of behaviour is consistent and ensures that students are treated fairly and with respect. In return students are proud to be members of Priesthorpe School and say that they are treated as adults.
- Students get on well with each other because there is a strong sense of community. Attitudes to learning are very positive and lessons are rarely interrupted by disruptive behaviour. Students clearly know that teachers have high expectations of their behaviour and know the consequences of any poor behaviour. Very few students were excluded last year and the school is intent on reducing figures even further.
- Students are confident in the school's ability to keep them safe and all parents who responded to the Parent View survey said that their child felt safe at school. Bullying is said to be rare but is not tolerated if it does occur. Students also know how to keep themselves safe, for example when using the internet. They are knowledgeable about the different forms bullying can take.
- Effective systems are in place to support students with behavioural and emotional difficulties. Individual behaviour plans and bespoke behaviour programmes clearly have a good impact on improving behaviour: for example, there has been a significant decrease in incidents of poor behaviour.
- Attendance is steadily improving and has moved from being below average at the time of the previous inspection to being above average currently. Punctuality to lessons and to school is good.

The leadership and management are good

- The determination of leaders to make the school even better clearly shines through. The school improvement plan sets out what it is the school needs to work on to make it even more successful. The plan rightly focuses strongly on improving achievement, particularly in the sixth form. All staff know what it is that the school wants to achieve and support it wholeheartedly.
- Most middle leaders lead their departments well and play a significant role in monitoring the quality of teaching in their areas, for example by checking progress and marking in students' books, which they have realised is inconsistent. They say that the school values their contribution and they are well supported.
- While there was a relatively small response to the online survey, those parents who did respond were pleased with the school's work and most would recommend it to others. Students are also highly positive about the school and enjoy attending.
- The quality of teaching is checked regularly. Effective systems ensure those staff who require improvement receive support and mentoring which help them to improve their practice. Training for teachers, for example in effective questioning techniques, has improved the quality of teaching.
- Clear links are evident between the management of teacher performance, their appraisal and their pay. The national teaching standards are at the heart of teachers' targets and staff all speak positively about the support they receive from leaders and managers to improve their

work.

- The good curriculum comprises a wide range of courses at both Key Stages 3 and 4 and in the sixth form. This ensures that students have good opportunities to choose courses they are interested in and which support their move to the next stage of education or the world of work. A good package of support has been provided by the local authority focusing on middle leadership, special educational needs, mathematics and science. Good links have been set up with another local school and this has ensured professional collaboration which has raised students' achievement.
- Some students in the sixth form are not achieving as well as they could, as their progress has not been monitored closely enough by leaders. As a result, a few students fall behind with their work and this is not always picked up quickly enough to ensure that they catch up.
- Students get on well with each other and differences in cultures and beliefs are celebrated. This contributes well to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the students. There is an absence of any form of discrimination and the school promotes equal opportunities well.
- Safeguarding arrangements are thorough and meet requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has contributed well to school improvement because it knows what the performance data show and has a clear understanding about how teaching is improved through performance management. They hold leaders to account for the way in which increases in pay are used to reward teachers. They regularly participate in training to keep abreast of developments and their knowledge and understanding of how the pupil premium is managed and spent is good. The school is questioned rigorously about its financial management. Safeguarding arrangements are scrutinised thoroughly.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	108087
Local authority	Leeds
Inspection number	405153

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	1,092
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	185
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ian Featherstone
Headteacher	Martin Blacoe
Date of previous school inspection	29 March 2011
Telephone number	0113 336 8833
Fax number	0113 236 2167
Email address	info@priesthorpe.leeds.sch.uk

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