

Priesthorpe School
Priesthorpe Lane, Farsley, Pudsey, West Yorkshire LS28 5SG

Inspection dates

31 January–1 February 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
16 to 19 study programmes	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Pupils do not make good progress from their various starting points. In Year 11 in 2016 pupils’ progress was significantly below the national average.
- Pupils make less progress in mathematics than in English. This is because the school has had to manage changes in staffing and leadership.
- Pupils’ current rates of progress across the school vary. Progress is better in key stage 3 than in key stage 4.
- The newly introduced assessment policy is not being used consistently. As a result, pupils are not always clear about where they are in their learning or how to improve their work.
- The quality of teaching is too variable. Some teaching does not focus sharply enough on what pupils need to learn.
- A number of subject leaders have recently been appointed and have yet to establish themselves in their new roles.
- Provision for wider aspects of study programmes for sixth form students are less well developed than the taught curriculum. The personal development programme requires further development.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher provides strong and determined leadership and school leaders and governors are ambitious for pupils and know the school’s strengths and weaknesses well.
- The support and training that staff receive and share with each other is good and is building the confidence and potential of staff.
- Pupils are well looked after. They have a good awareness of how to protect themselves against potential danger. The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Effective collaboration with other schools and partners means that the school holds itself to account and shares good practice. This is having a positive impact on all aspects of the school.
- There is a culture of safety in the school, and as a result pupils say they feel safe in school.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Fully implement the new assessment scheme so that it is consistently understood and used by all teachers to evaluate pupils' work, identify and resolve underachievement and provide information for all pupils on how to improve their work.
- Improve outcomes, particularly in mathematics, by accelerating the pace at which all pupils are catching up with their peers nationally, especially in key stage 4.
- Ensure that senior leaders improve outcomes and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
 - improving the skills and knowledge of subject leaders to enable them to improve teaching and further drive up attainment in their subjects
 - ensuring that teachers use assessment information and knowledge of pupils' varying starting points to provide suitably challenging work.
- Strengthen the quality of provision and outcomes in the sixth form by:
 - developing the wider study programme, including that for students' personal development, so that it fully supports students' needs
 - increasing the proportion of pupils who achieve the higher grades in GCSE re-takes in English and mathematics
 - improving the attendance of disadvantaged students.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders, including governors, have not been successful in ensuring that pupils make consistently good progress. Consequently, pupils lag behind their peers nationally in important subjects such as English and mathematics.
- Some subject leaders are new to post and have yet to demonstrate their impact on improving outcomes.
- Subject leadership is now an emerging strength at the school. In mathematics, for example, the change in leadership and staffing has brought stability and continuity to teaching and there is a clearly improving picture of progress in mathematics for pupils across the school. This has been endorsed by positive pupil comments.
- The headteacher provides strong leadership and has a clear vision for the school. Increasingly, senior leaders, subject leaders and governors share this vision and determination. The headteacher and his leadership team recognise that there is more to do. There is now a shared understanding across all staff at the school about what needs to be done to further improve pupils' outcomes.
- Leadership of teaching is developing and this has helped in ensuring that lessons proceed smoothly. Good systems for collecting data on pupils' progress in all subjects mean that leaders are now able to challenge classroom practice if pupils are not making the expected progress. This has not always been the case. Weak teaching is being tackled.
- The school receives effective support and challenge from a number of external sources including the local authority and partner schools. These reviews help evaluate pupils' attainment and progress and the sharing of good practice. The local authority has also worked closely with the governing body, who increasingly hold senior leaders to account.
- A clearer and newly introduced assessment process is improving standards. Leaders have set targets that are more challenging for all pupils, to raise their aspirations and to ensure that all teachers are planning learning that challenges all groups of pupils. Leaders now undertake close tracking of pupils' progress and this is making a positive contribution to the achievement of disadvantaged pupils, and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. However, leaders are aware that there still needs to be greater consistency.
- The newly appointed leader for special educational needs is beginning to improve the provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. She has introduced targeted learning 'passports' for pupils and secured additional resourcing. This is impacting on pupils' learning and current work.
- The school has a well-planned and well-delivered programme to support the personal development and welfare of all pupils. Leaders want all pupils to be 'great' learners and use assembly time well to promote and share this ambition with pupils. The use of coaching groups further enables pupils to be involved in reflective learning and learning about what it means to be a good citizen.

- Leaders have improved the curriculum and it is now broad and balanced. Action has been taken to improve underperforming subjects and create a curriculum that fully meets the needs of pupils in key stage 3 and key stage 4. The school still needs to review the wider study programme for post-16 learners.
- The weekly professional development programme has been effective and teachers talk positively about 'the genius bar', where they can choose to attend professional development sessions and then trial new approaches to learning in their lessons. This is also supported by subject learning 'triads' which encourage teachers to further develop their teaching methods.
- The school uses pupil premium funding wisely. A well-targeted strategy of support and interventions is having a positive impact on current disadvantaged pupils' achievement and attendance. Leaders are aware that the differences in outcomes that remain between this group and other pupils nationally are too wide and are working hard to reduce these differences.
- The school's use of Year 7 catch-up funding is having a successful impact on improving eligible pupils' literacy skills. There has been a strong focus on improving the literacy skills of pupils, particularly at key stage 3. As a result, there have been improvements in reading ages for key stage 3 pupils. The development of numeracy skills is not as strong.
- Pupils benefit from extra-curricular activities after school, including the Duke of Edinburgh Award and a range of sporting and performing arts activities. Pupils say they value the residential trips they have been on and the opportunity to attend intervention classes to help them catch up on lost learning.

Governance of the school

- Governors work effectively with the school, local authority and partner schools, and value the support and challenge that they receive. There is a clear sense of purpose in the work they do and an openness and transparency in the way they work.
- Governors take their responsibilities seriously. They are proactive in seeking out opportunities to further develop their skills and expertise and to ensure that the school is well placed to take full advantage of partnership working with other schools.
- Governors increasingly are now better informed and have the skills and experience to both challenge and support school leaders. They have a clear understanding about how pupils are achieving in comparison to national information and link this well to teacher performance and pay.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. This is as a result of strong leadership and robust systems. Staff know the pupils well and pupils are confident that they can talk to adults who will help them.
- The checks that are made on the suitability of staff to work with children are all in place. The recruitment procedures are robust and all staff receive regular and appropriate training to ensure they are aware of recent developments in ensuring children are kept safe.

- Pupils feel confident about personal safety, particularly keeping themselves safe online, and trust staff in the school to support them should they have issues or concerns.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching over time has not secured good progress for pupils. This is especially the case for boys, pupils who are disadvantaged and the least able pupils. However, improvements are evident, especially in key stage 3.
- The quality of presentation in books is variable within classes and across subjects. Pupils are not always careful enough and do not take a pride in the quality of the work they produce. The quality of pupils' work can vary within the same class, as expectations are not consistently high for all pupils.
- Teachers sometimes miss opportunities to probe and extend pupils' knowledge and understanding through questioning. Typically, when pupils answer questions teachers do not give pupils time to think and develop their answers.
- The assessment system is too new to provide teachers with all the information they need to support their planning, and teachers do not use it consistently. As a result, pupils are not always clear about how well they are doing and are unsure of their learning targets.
- The quality of teachers' feedback to pupils is not consistently in line with the school's policy. Teachers do not generally check that pupils have acted on their feedback and, as a result, a significant number of pupils do not benefit from their teachers' advice. Feedback to pupils is of a better quality and used by pupils more consistently in English and mathematics than in other curriculum subjects.
- Pupils are encouraged to express and discuss their ideas. In a Year 10 coaching lesson pupils asked sensitive and considered questions while planning for a fund-raising event. This led to a lively discussion where pupils shared opinions and evaluated the contributions made by their peers.
- There is good and better teaching in the school with pupils challenged well, where expectations are high and where teachers are able to get the best out of all the pupils they are teaching. This was seen by inspectors in mathematics and the teaching of key stage 4 science, and also in pupils' work in their exercise books. More work still needs to be done to ensure that teachers take full account of individual pupils' starting points rather than all starting from the same point.
- Teaching for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is improving because leaders provide a good level of support for them. The use of individual learning 'passports' enables teachers to plan effectively to support the learning needs of pupils.
- The school provides opportunities for staff to improve their practice in line with the headteacher's strategies for whole-school improvement. Teachers attend 'triad' meetings in their subjects and receive direct support from other schools. Teachers report that they are able to learn from each other and share good practice.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are kept safe at school, supported by caring staff who know the pupils well and who promote a rigorous safeguarding culture. Pupils are taught how to avoid potential dangers and risk and can report any concerns or worries confidentially. Pupils say they are safe and well looked after in school.
- Teaching and support staff that completed the online survey said that the school keeps its pupils safe. The majority of parents who responded to the Parent View survey also endorsed this opinion. Inspectors' observations in school and the analysis of records confirmed that it is a safe environment for young people.
- Most pupils show confidence and are keen to share their thoughts and views on what the school is doing to support their learning. They have opportunities to do this through the weekly 'coaching' programme, which supports the spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development of pupils. Leaders strongly believe that values and attitudes can be taught and inspectors saw pupils putting this into practice.
- Pupils told inspectors that this is an 'inclusive school' and one where bullying is always dealt with quickly and effectively. The detailed records that the school keeps confirm this view.
- Staff have worked effectively to encourage the development of pupils' self-confidence, both academically and pastorally. The school supports pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those pupils who face challenging circumstances very well. This is having a positive impact on their academic and personal development.
- Pupils are prepared adequately to progress to the next stage of education, training or employment. A well-planned and delivered careers programme focuses on raising pupils' future aspirations when they leave school. Opportunities exist for pupils to develop leadership skills through the Duke of Edinburgh Award.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are helpful, polite and courteous to staff and visitors. A caring and supportive atmosphere exists across the school.
- Pupils behave well at social times and when moving around the school. At times, the corridors are congested and pupils respond well to adult supervision and direction.
- Pupils display positive attitudes to learning and arrive at lessons promptly. They come to lessons prepared to learn. A lack of interesting work can lead to some pupils becoming less engaged and being off-task. Where this is the case, lessons lack challenge and are not meeting pupils' needs.
- Improving pupils' attendance is a high priority for the school. Year 11 was a key concern in 2016 and is so again this year. Currently, overall attendance is improved on last year for all pupil groups. This is because the school has employed additional staff to support pupil attendance and is more thorough in reviewing attendance patterns. Leaders sensibly link attendance to pupils' progress and this is highlighted and

challenged at weekly review meetings.

- The school monitors the behaviour, attendance and learning of pupils taught off-site to ensure their safety and secure progress. They receive careful support, including from different agencies, that helps them deal with the particular challenges they face.
- No pupils have been permanently excluded from the school in recent years. The school has a range of alternative provision in place and this is used well to support and engage pupils who are at risk of fixed-term exclusion from school.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils' progress in mathematics is not strong enough. From their starting points, pupils make slower progress in mathematics than in English. Current information provided by the school indicates that there is some improvement in mathematics, particularly in key stage 4. Inspectors saw this in lessons observed in mathematics with senior leaders from the school and also in the work seen by inspectors in pupils' books.
- The progress of boys and all disadvantaged pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, is not consistently good. Leaders' actions have not yet turned round the legacy of underachievement sufficiently to enable them to catch up with other pupils nationally.
- Leaders recognise that the differences between the achievement of boys and girls and between those who are disadvantaged and those who are not are not closing fast enough. A number of strategies and interventions have now been put in place, supported by additional funding, and are beginning to impact positively on pupils' progress.
- While the progress and attainment of pupils in key stage 3 is accelerating at a good pace it is not improving as fast in key stage 4.
- Published information shows that low-ability pupils and disadvantaged pupils made slow progress. Inspectors looked at the work of low-ability pupils very carefully to check that recent improvements in teaching are helping these pupils to make effective progress. The work of disadvantaged pupils shows that their progress is improving and differences in attainment compared with other pupils nationally are beginning to diminish.
- Weaknesses in the 2016 GCSE results in physical education, French, history and food technology were due to past weaknesses in subject leadership and teaching. Teaching, learning and progress are now more effective in these subjects. Strong teaching, progress and outcomes in 2016 examinations were seen in art and design, health and social care, English language, geography and biology.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are now well supported. Their needs are carefully assessed and increasingly effective support is provided. The school's information shows that these pupils are now making faster overall progress but this varies between subjects, with stronger progress in English and science than in mathematics.
- Off-site and alternative provision provides well for the personal development needs of pupils. It has not, however, secured good academic success for pupils and this has impacted on outcomes. In 2016, a small number did not achieve a grade in

mathematics and English. The school is now closely monitoring the progress of pupils taught at alternative provision sites.

- The proportion of pupils who leave school to go on to education, employment or training has improved for disadvantaged pupils. It is still slightly below the national average. However, too many pupils have to re-sit English and/or mathematics.

16 to 19 study programmes

Requires improvement

- Leaders in the sixth form track the attainment and progress of students closely. This is done with sixth form consortium partners and ensures that any students who are at risk of underachieving are quickly identified and supported.
- Students' progress improved in 2016 for both academic and vocational courses. This is as a result of effective teaching and strengthened leadership, which focuses on checking and developing the quality of teaching. Teaching in the sixth form has improved and so have outcomes. However, further work is required to ensure that both are good. Leaders predict that outcomes this year will continue to rise.
- Teachers use a range of strategies to engage students in their lessons. Students spoke very positively about the pre-learning activities they are given in business studies and computing lessons, which enable them to deepen their knowledge and understanding of these subjects.
- Scrutiny of students' work revealed that there are limited opportunities for students to engage in regular extended work and practise newly taught skills. Teachers do provide regular feedback. However, student responses are variable and often tend to be brief.
- Leaders endeavour to ensure that all students receive regular and impartial careers advice and guidance and the school employs a careers coordinator. A number of students are not accessing this provision.
- GCSE English and mathematics re-take courses are offered to those students who have not yet achieved a pass at grade C or above. The numbers of students attaining a higher-grade pass remain low.
- Leaders have not monitored the quality and effectiveness of the school's enrichment programme for sixth form students. Students report that planned activities clash with fieldwork trips and this has reduced opportunities for work experience and enrichment activities.
- Retention rates from Year 12 and Year 13 are similar to national averages and are improving. Destinations are tracked closely and the majority of students pursue university education or higher-level apprenticeships. All students go on to be in appropriate education, employment or training.
- Attendance overall for sixth form students continues to improve. The rates of attendance of disadvantaged students are below those of their peers.
- Students have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. They describe the school as a safe and friendly community with a culture where bullying is rare. They express an absolute confidence in their teachers to deal with any issues or concerns they may have.
- The school meets the minimum standards for the 16 to 19 study programmes.

School details

Unique reference number	108087
Local authority	Leeds
Inspection number	10023925

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,108
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	151
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ian Featherstone
Headteacher	Martin Blacoe
Telephone number	0113 257 4115
Website	http://www.priesthorpe.org/
Email address	l.singer@priesthorpe.org
Date of previous inspection	29–30 November 2012

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- Priesthorpe School is larger than the average secondary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium is higher than the national average.

- Over half the pupils are from minority ethnic groups, which is almost twice the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is average.
- The school uses its own off-site provision, West 14, and a number of alternative providers including a partnership-run specialist inclusive learning centre (SILC), which is on the school's site.
- The sixth form consortium partners are Crawshaw Academy and Pudsey Grangefield School.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for the attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 11. In addition, the school meets the minimum interim standards for sixth forms.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors undertook observations of pupils' learning in 63 lessons, including 12 joint observations with senior members of staff. They reviewed work in pupils' books, covering subjects including English, mathematics, science, modern foreign languages, geography, history, RE and design and technology and the sixth form, to check attainment, progress, feedback and presentation.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders, school governors, and representatives from the local authority. Inspectors held meetings with pupils from all key stages and spoke informally to pupils inside and outside of lessons. Inspectors heard a number of pupils read.
- Inspectors looked at the school's website and a range of school documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans as well as safeguarding records and governors' minutes. They also looked at the school's attendance, behaviour and exclusions information.
- The views of 96 parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, were considered. Inspectors also considered 66 questionnaires completed by members of staff and 10 questionnaires completed by pupils in the school.

Inspection team

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Stephen Crossley	Ofsted Inspector
Jeremy Haigh	Ofsted Inspector
Lynn Kenworthy	Ofsted Inspector
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Julia Wright	Ofsted Inspector

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