



Burford School and Community College

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 123235
LEA Oxfordshire LEA
Inspection number 281438
Inspection dates 26 April 2006 to 27 April 2006
Reporting inspector Peter Nelson

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

Type of school	Comprehensive	School address	Cheltenham Road
School category	Community		Burford
Age range of pupils	11 to 18		OX18 4PL
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01993 823303
Number on roll	1155	Fax number	01993 823101
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Malcolm Harper
Date of previous inspection	27 March 2000	Headteacher	Mr Patrick Sanders

Age group 11 to 18	Inspection dates 26 April 2006 - 27 April 2006	Inspection number 281438
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Burford School is a large, non-selective coeducational 11-18 secondary school. There are approximately 970 students in Years 7 to 11 and 185 students in the sixth form. The proportions of students at the school eligible for free school meals, from a minority ethnic heritage, and whose first language is not English, are below average. The proportion of students identified as having special educational needs is also low. The school provides boarding accommodation for approximately 90 students.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Burford is a good school with some outstanding features. The effectiveness of the sixth form is good, and the effectiveness and efficiency of the boarding is outstanding.

Achievement and standards are good. Students make good progress in Years 7 to 11 and satisfactory progress in the sixth form. Students' results in national tests are significantly above average in Year 9 and at GCSE and above average at GCE A level.

Personal development and well-being are good. Student behaviour and attitudes are positive, and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. Students feel safe and they enjoy their education. They make positive contributions within the school and to the wider community. Students are too often late to lessons.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Students make good progress as a result of effective teaching. The school acknowledges the need to develop teachers' use of differentiation, assessment for learning and ICT in lessons. The school also needs to improve ICT facilities in classrooms. The school's curriculum is broad, particularly in Key Stage 3. There is a very wide range of enrichment opportunities for all students. The school is committed to providing a very high standard of care. Staff provide good support and guidance for students. The support for students with learning difficulties and disabilities is outstanding.

The school is well led and managed by an experienced senior leadership team supported by a committed governing body. They have a clear insight into the relative strengths and areas for improvement of the school which are very accurately identified in the school's self evaluation and action plans which clearly identify priorities for development. The school has made good progress since the last inspection and a strong capacity to continue to improve. Financial control is good. The school achieves good value for money.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 2

The overall effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form are good. Standards have been consistently above average over the last few years. The students provide admirable role models for the rest of the school and they take part in many enrichment activities, including providing support to younger students. Students are able to choose from a wide range of academic courses but the lack of vocational options means that the curriculum does not match the needs of all. Students receive good guidance about higher education and are well supported in their academic work and personal development. Leadership and management of the sixth form are good and there is clear commitment to raising standards and improving provision.

Effectiveness and efficiency of boarding provision

Grade: 1

The quality of the boarding provision is outstanding. The physical environment is very well appointed, immaculately clean and tidy. Dormitories and common rooms offer boarders a relaxed and informal atmosphere with very good access to spaces and resources for recreation and study. Students speak very highly of the supportive and caring staff who are committed to their personal development and well being. As a result boarding makes a very strong contribution to students' personal development. Boarders have a wide range of extracurricular activities available at evenings and weekends including sports activities, trips to local towns, sailing, swimming and ice skating. The provision adds value to the school community. Boarders come from diverse backgrounds and include a number of international students. Students with English as an Additional Language are given additional support by a specialist teacher.

Appropriate action has been taken to address weaknesses identified in previous inspections conducted by the Commission for Social Care Inspectorate (CSCI). The school has complied with the recommendations set in the last two reports. All the additional areas arising from the February 2004 visit have been implemented. As a result, the school fully meets the national minimum standards for boarding schools.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop teaching and learning strategies, with particular regard to differentiation, assessment for learning and the use of ICT in lessons;
- Extend teachers' access to ICT resources in classrooms;
- Improve students' punctuality;
- Provide further vocational opportunities for students at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 3

Standards across Years 7 to 11 are high and achievement is good. In the sixth form progress is satisfactory and standards achieved by students are above the national average.

Students enter the school with above average attainment. The progress of students in Years 7 to 11 has consistently been significantly above the national average for a number of years. Results from 2005 indicate that by the end of Year 9 students made good progress and their national test results were well above average in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Between Years 9 and 11 students made good progress in English and satisfactory progress overall. GCSE results in 2005 were significantly above the national average in most subjects.

In the sixth form students' progress is broadly satisfactory. At GCE AS level the proportion of students achieving A to E grades and the proportion achieving high

grades has declined slightly over the past four years, but remains above the national average. Students also make satisfactory progress in the second year of the sixth form and in 2005 GCE A2 examination results were also above the national average.

The quality of students' work in lessons and in their exercise books is generally good. However, a small minority of students take insufficient care over the presentation of their work, or the maintenance of their exercise books and files. Teachers set suitably challenging targets in lessons. Students are aware of their targets. Teachers regularly make reference to students' progress relative to their targets. Students are therefore aware of whether they are making sufficient progress to achieve their target grade.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Students' personal development is good. Students respond well to the school's ethos of consideration for others. As a result, behaviour is good around the school and in lessons. Students' positive attitudes to learning are reflected in the high level of engagement in lessons and the positive and respectful relationships with peers and teachers. Attendance is above average but too often pupils are late for the beginning of lessons.

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Personal, social and health education (PSHE), religious education, assemblies and the citizenship programme are effective in developing positive spiritual and moral awareness so that students know right from wrong. They gain awareness of global moral and social issues through citizenship, geography, history, music and other subjects of the curriculum. Students' social development is a strength of the school. Students are confident and demonstrate very good listening and collaborative skills in group work. Cultural development is supported well by the creative curriculum and the wide range of extra curricular activities, trips and overseas links, especially with the partner school in Uganda.

Students feel safe and say that bullying is not a facet of the school as teachers take prompt and effective action on the very rare occasions it is reported. However, a small minority of parents are concerned about safety and supervision of students on school buses. There is a good focus in the school on promoting healthy life styles through PE, food technology, PSHE and extra curricular sporting activities. Boarders speak very highly of the supportive and caring staff who are committed to their personal development and well being. Students contribute to the school through peer mentoring and the school council. Sixth form students demonstrate considerable maturity. There is good provision for work related learning which develops skills that help contribute to students' future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

Teachers have sound subject knowledge and lessons are well planned. They incorporate a wide variety of activities that make effective use of the available resources. Teachers manage their lessons well and have a positive rapport with their students enabling effective learning to take place. Students are well motivated and indicate that they enjoy their lessons. Teaching assistants are effectively deployed and make significant contributions to students' learning and progress.

In the best lessons teachers have high expectations and match activities to students' preferred learning styles. Teachers also ensure that lessons have a brisk pace and appropriate challenge. In less successful lessons teachers do not always make clear what students are to learn and in some cases the activities are not fully differentiated to match students' interests and capabilities. Teachers make comparatively little use of ICT as a core part of teaching and learning, and many classrooms are not suitably equipped for its use. The school acknowledges that assessment for learning is a high priority for development as is greater focus on differentiation in lessons and the integration of ICT across all subject areas.

All students are aware of Key Stage 3 target levels and target grades for GCSE and A level subjects and there is an effective tracking system. On occasions the regularity of marking of students' work in some areas is inconsistent.

Students with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress. Their needs are accurately identified and they are excellently supported. Provision for gifted and talented students is also good, with many students participating in specialist enrichment activities such as summer schools.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The Key Stage 3 curriculum is broad and balanced and comprehensively meets statutory requirements. The school uses both setting by ability and mixed ability teaching effectively and students make good progress. Although the Key Stage 4 curriculum covers a broad range of subjects and options providing some choices to be made in line with students' needs and aspirations, vocational options are limited. The curriculum makes good provision for the development of literacy and numeracy skills. Provision for work related learning, enterprise and citizenship is good. A wide range of music, drama, sport activities and subject clubs is offered during lunch times and after school, many students taking advantage of the late buses to participate in these activities.

In the sixth form students have a wide choice of academic subjects. There have been some recent additions such as photography and critical thinking. There are few

vocational options in the sixth form. The school is aware of the need to broaden the provision still further to match the needs of all students.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides good care, guidance and support for its students.

There are robust procedures for safeguarding students' health and safety. The very effective pastoral system ensures that students are also well supported in their academic and personal development. There is strong support for students who are deemed to be underachieving relative to their ability. Those who have learning difficulties and disabilities receive excellent support from teachers and teaching assistants as well as from the learning support unit. Students in year 11 receive good guidance on course options and sixth form students are given sound advice on progression into higher education. The school complies with statutory requirements to carry out police checks on staff but these records are kept by the Local Authority and were not available to inspectors.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management of the school and the sixth form are good. The senior leadership team all share the same clear vision for the school and are working effectively as a team to achieve it. Their commitment to raising achievement is shared by all staff who are also highly supportive of the leadership team. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school's leadership.

Areas of weakness previously identified in middle management have now been successfully rectified through good new appointments and effective training. Performance management is fully embedded in the school. The self evaluation carried out by the school is very accurate. Staff and governors were fully involved in its production. The school clearly knows its strengths and weaknesses and is taking appropriate action to continue to improve. Monitoring of teaching and learning is carried out regularly and is effective in helping teachers to improve. The school has comprehensively addressed issues identified at the last inspection. It is well placed for further improvement and has good capacity to maintain and raise standards.

Governors are effective in their role. They have a broad range of skills and provide good support as well as providing challenge to senior staff as appropriate.

The school is committed to inclusion and equal opportunities and this is demonstrated by, for example, a strong learning support department and by a commitment to take on challenging pupils who have been excluded from other schools.

Finances are well managed in the school. Budget planning and control are good and include full governor oversight. Principles of best value are followed and departments are given full responsibility and accountability for their own budgets. There are many

initiatives taken by the school to raise funds to develop further opportunities for students. The school provides good value for money.

The specialist technology status obtained in 2003 has provided some improved ICT facilities and technology equipment as well as enabling stronger partnerships to be developed with partner schools.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	2
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	Yes
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	
The behaviour of learners	2	
The attendance of learners	2	
How well learners enjoy their education	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	Yes

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Students

Thank you all for the warm welcome and courtesy you showed us during our visit to your school. I am writing to you to summarise our main findings. We hope you will discuss these in your school council and in tutorials, so that you can work with your teachers to help raise standards further.

Your school is a good school with some outstanding features. All the students with whom we met spoke very highly of the school and indicated that you really enjoy your time at Burford. You are well behaved around the school, although on occasions you are late for lessons. You are performing well in your key stage 3 tests, at GCSE and at A level. You are making particularly good progress in key stage 3. In the lessons we visited, we found that teachers plan work well and ensure that you are suitably challenged, and engaged in classroom activities. You all seem to know your targets, and teachers regularly made reference to what you need to do to meet or exceed them. You have an appropriate range of subjects from which to choose, and there are plenty of opportunities for you to take part in lunchtime or after school clubs and sporting activities. The school provides good support and guidance for you and assures your personal development and well-being. A significant minority of your parents expressed some concern over the limited level of staff supervision on the school buses. The school is well led and managed. Senior managers are good at identifying any potential weaknesses in the school and taking action to bring about improvements. We were particularly impressed by the excellent boarding facilities and the opportunities that were available to those of you who board.

We have indicated four areas for improvement within the school: * Develop teaching and learning strategies, with particular regard to differentiation, assessment for learning and the use of ICT in lessons; * Extend teachers' access to ICT resource in classrooms; * Improve students' punctuality; * Provide further vocational opportunities for students at key stage 4 and in the sixth form. On behalf of the inspectors, I wish you and your teachers well in maintaining and improving the quality of education at Burford school in the future.

Yours faithfully

Peter Nelson

Her Majesty's Inspector