

Inspection of Burscough Priory Academy

Trevor Road, Burscough, Ormskirk L40 7RZ

Inspection dates: 22 and 23 November 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Burscough Priory Academy is a calm and welcoming learning community where staff and pupils are kind and respectful towards each other. Pupils are happy and safe. They value the many improvements that leaders have made to the quality of education that they receive.

Leaders and teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Most pupils meet these expectations. Pupils benefit from a positive climate for learning. They told inspectors that this is a school where they can learn well.

Pupils said that they enjoy studying a broad range of subjects. They explained that teachers expect them to achieve highly. Across the school, pupils achieve well. They experience a suitably ambitious curriculum that prepares them well for the next stages in their education.

Pupils enjoy taking part in a range of activities, which enhances their wider development. These activities include sports, debating and strategy gaming. Pupils develop an awareness of current issues, which helps to broaden and deepen their understanding of the world.

Pastoral support is a strength of the school. Pupils said that there is always someone on hand to turn to if they have any worries or concerns. For example, staff deal with any incidents of bullying in a timely and effective way.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders and staff have designed an ambitious curriculum for all pupils. The curriculum sets out clearly the key knowledge that pupils should learn and the order in which they should learn it. In most subjects, pupils benefit from subject content that is commensurate with the breadth and depth of the national curriculum. Leaders ensure that pupils study a broad and balanced range of subjects. At key stage 4, the number of pupils studying the English Baccalaureate suite of subjects is rising. This reflects leaders' aspirations for all pupils to have a firm foundation for future success.

In most subjects, teachers use their strong subject knowledge to deliver the curriculum well. In these subjects, teachers provide regular opportunities for pupils to connect and deepen their learning. However, in a small number of subjects in Years 7 and 8, pupils do not have the opportunity to acquire new knowledge in depth or to apply this knowledge to new concepts. In these subjects, pupils sometimes find it difficult to remember and connect what they have learned.

In most subjects, teachers use assessment systems effectively to identify gaps or misconceptions in pupils' knowledge and understanding. Teachers use this information well to revisit and secure pupils' prior learning.

Leaders accurately identify the additional needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teachers use this information effectively in order to adapt the delivery of the curriculum so that these pupils can follow the same ambitious curriculum as their peers.

Across all year groups, leaders have taken swift and effective action to help pupils to develop their fluency in reading. Leaders accurately identify gaps in pupils' reading knowledge, and they arrange appropriate support. This helps these pupils to become more confident readers so that they can successfully follow the full curriculum. Pupils read well across the curriculum and enjoy opportunities to read for pleasure.

Pupils behave well in lessons. Low-level disruption is rare, and when it does occur, teachers and leaders deal with it swiftly and effectively. A small number of pupils do not behave as well as leaders expect them to outside of lessons. Leaders keep detailed records of behaviour and how staff have supported pupils pastorally. However, sometimes leaders do not evaluate fully the information that they hold about pupils' behaviour to spot patterns and provide timely support.

Leaders have designed a well-considered and effective personal development curriculum. Pupils learn about healthy relationships, looking after their own well-being and the importance of accepting each other's differences. They are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Trustees and the local academy council hold leaders to account well for the quality of education that pupils receive. Leaders are considerate of staff's development, workload and well-being. Staff are proud to work at this school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff ensure a strong safeguarding culture at the school. Staff know pupils well and are aware of the welfare issues that they may face. Leaders have put in place effective systems so that concerns about pupils' well-being can be reported quickly. Staff act on concerns promptly and provide appropriate support for pupils who may be in need of extra help.

Leaders work effectively with external agencies to ensure that pupils and their families have access to any specialist support that they need. Pupils learn about how to stay safe in their local community. They benefit from opportunities to think about unwanted sexual behaviour, consent and how to protect themselves when online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of subjects, the curriculum for pupils in Years 7 and 8 lacks depth. As a result, pupils' learning is limited by the lack of opportunity to link new knowledge to what they have already learned. Leaders should ensure that all pupils, in all year groups, benefit from a curriculum that consistently matches the scope of the national curriculum.
- Sometimes leaders do not analyse or use the information that they gather to spot patterns in pupils' behaviour. As a result, on occasion, a small number of pupils who struggle to regulate their behaviour do not, at times, receive the most appropriate help in a timely way. Leaders should use the information that they have about pupils' behaviour to address their specific needs effectively.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	146282
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10244624
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	669
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Helen Dicker
Headteacher	Lucy MacLaren
Website	www.burscoughprioryacademy.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Burscough Priory Academy converted to become an academy school in September 2018. When its predecessor school, Burscough Priory Science College, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be inadequate overall. The school is part of the Endeavour Learning Trust.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.
- Leaders do not use any alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection that the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors held meetings with the chair of the multi-academy trust board, the trust's chief executive officer, the chair and vice-chair of the local academy council and the school improvement partner.
- Inspectors also met with the headteacher, other senior leaders, subject leaders and the special educational needs coordinator.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in mathematics, science, modern foreign languages and music. They visited a sample of lessons in these subjects, discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, reviewed pupils' work and held discussions with teachers and pupils.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils about their experiences of school life and their views of behaviour and bullying. Inspectors also observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documentary evidence, including leaders' improvement plans.
- An inspector looked at safeguarding policies and reviewed leaders' records of checks on the suitability of staff and governors. They met with the leaders who have overall responsibility for safeguarding. Inspectors spoke with staff and pupils about leaders' work to keep pupils safe.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff and Ofsted's online survey for pupils. Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View. This included some free-text responses.
- Inspectors spoke to staff about their workload and well-being.

Inspection team

Andy Cunningham, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
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Michael Pennington	His Majesty's Inspector
Lindy Griffiths	Ofsted Inspector
Philip Wood	Ofsted Inspector

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