

Priory CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	132240
Local Authority	Stoke-On-Trent
Inspection number	341322
Inspection dates	15–16 October 2009
Reporting inspector	Judith Straw

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	357
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Helen Jackson
Headteacher	Mr Matthew Loader
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 16 lessons and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at its assessment data, pupils' individual education plans, monitoring and evaluation documents, school policies and procedures. One hundred and twenty six parental questionnaires, 100 pupil and 32 staff questionnaires were analysed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- attainment and progress in mathematics, especially for boys, to determine whether the school's self-evaluation is accurate
- the attainment and progress of the more-able pupils and that of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, to determine whether teaching is challenging enough and whether teachers' expectations are high enough
- the quality of leadership and management and whether middle managers are sufficiently involved in monitoring the school's progress
- the effectiveness of teaching, learning and assessment on the progress and achievement of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Information about the school

This is a much larger than average size school near the centre of Stoke-on-Trent. Pupils come from a wide range of social backgrounds. The proportion entitled to claim a free school meal is below average. Most pupils are of White British heritage. There are small groups from other ethnic backgrounds, few of whom are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above average, although an average number of pupils have a statement of special educational needs. Provision for the Early Years Foundation stage is in one Nursery and two Reception classes. The school operates 'The Link Club', registered day care offering a breakfast and after-school club and a holiday play scheme. The school currently holds the Healthy Schools Award and Active Mark. A new headteacher took up post in September 2009.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school. Standards are rising as a result of actions taken by leaders and managers to improve the quality of education for all pupils. Consistently good teaching and learning, an increasingly creative curriculum and effective management, have had a positive impact on pupils' progress. The school has succeeded in narrowing the gap, since its last inspection, between the performance of boys and girls; standards in mathematics have risen and the quality of education in the Early Years Foundation Stage has improved, so that children now enter Year 1 with skills that are above national expectations. By the end of Year 6, standards are no better than average because there is still a legacy of underachievement from times when pupils made less good progress. The school takes outstanding care of all its pupils. The way in which the school works with other agencies to meet the needs of pupils is exemplary.

Pupils' good personal development contributes significantly to how well they achieve. Attendance is above average and this reflects pupils' enjoyment of school and their enthusiasm for learning. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is outstanding and their cultural development is good. They are aware of cultural diversity and value the similarities that pupils share despite differences in culture or background. Pupils are reflective and secure in the positive ethos which underpins all that the school does. Their behaviour is excellent and pupils say they are entirely safe and happy in school. They eagerly put into practice the school's excellent advice on healthy living.

Teaching is good. Strengths in teaching are to be seen in the way pupils are managed and their efforts encouraged. Lessons are pacy and challenging. As a result, most pupils are eager to learn. Lessons are planned to meet the needs of pupils of different abilities, but few pupils know the levels at which they are working or how to reach the next step. Efforts to improve writing across the school have not yet had an impact on raising standards. The presentation of pupils' work is sometimes untidy and few opportunities are provided for pupils to write at length.

The school has made good progress in the areas identified for development at the last inspection. Standards have risen from significantly below average three years ago, to currently being average and in some aspects above average. Outstanding care has been maintained. Leaders and managers have been instrumental in bringing about improvements because of the accuracy of their self-evaluation. The new headteacher has quickly earned the confidence of the staff and the approval of parents. All these positive aspects show that the school has a good capacity to sustain improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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- Raise standards in writing by:
 - setting higher expectations for the presentation of pupils' work
 - creating more opportunities for pupils to write at length.
- Accelerate learning by ensuring that pupils know the levels at which they are working and how to reach the next level.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Pupils make good progress in their work from their various starting points. In many cases, pupils exceed the targets set for them. Good teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants ensures that all pupils are helped to improve. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. The excellent provision for pupils in the nurture group enables those pupils who otherwise find school difficult to also progress well.

Pupils work at a good pace and clearly enjoy their lessons and other activities in school. A typical comment in the pupils' questionnaires was, 'Lessons are really exciting and they push me to read.' Pupils are proud of their work and enjoy showing visitors what they can do. In many lessons observed pupils were engrossed in their studies, working in pairs and independently and clearly keen to be successful.

Standards at the end of Year 6 are broadly average. They have been steadily rising over the last three years. In the latest published results, pupils achieved above average standards in English and science and average in mathematics. The inspection looked closely at progress in mathematics and whether there was sufficient challenge for the more-able pupils and sufficient support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. In all cases they were satisfied that the pupils were enabled to make good progress. In writing, however, teachers are accepting poor presentation and not giving pupils enough opportunities for writing at greater length.

Pupils are confident to express their ideas; they respect views that may differ from their own and they understand how to be responsible young citizens. In recent elections to the school council and the newly formed ECO council, 120 pupils put their names forward for election. Pupils have a strong voice and their views and opinions contribute well to school improvement. They eagerly seize on the many opportunities to participate and take a lead in school life which prepares them well for the next stage of their education.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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

How effective is the provision?

Teachers plan lessons which are interesting, challenging and matched to the needs of the pupils. All lessons are characterised by good relationships between pupils and adults and there is a positive atmosphere for learning. Teachers use information and communication technology (ICT) well to demonstrate, inspire and enthuse. Pupils enjoy using ICT in the course of their studies and develop good skills. Teachers set high expectations and good challenge in their lessons, but too many accept poorly presented work and do not give pupils enough opportunities to develop their skills by writing at length.

The curriculum is broad and balanced and has an increasingly creative dimension. The emphasis is on developing pupils' key skills, but in such a way as to promote enjoyment and enthusiastic participation. The school has been successful in improving standards in mathematics, but, as yet, implemented strategies have not impacted on raising attainment in writing. The school works with a variety of partners to provide a good range of sporting activities for pupils. These include gymnastics and dance clubs, athletics, football, netball and cricket. There is high take-up for all the extra-curricular activities provided, including chess, science, choir and 'songbird' club. An international dimension is included with the school's strong links with schools in Uganda, South African and Shanghai.

The school takes excellent care of all its pupils. High quality support is provided at all the major change-over periods, when children enter the school, transfer between the different key stages and then move on to secondary school. The Link club is run by the school to provide before- and after-school care and a holiday club. Staff are keen to

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make sure pupils enjoy the various activities. Pupils get on well together with older children playing with and supporting the younger ones. Healthy snacks are available. Pupils participate in many crafts, sporting activities or quiet reading.

Attendance is closely monitored and the school has excellent strategies to promote good attendance and sets high expectations for punctuality. As a result attendance is above average and pupils arrive at school on time. The school provides pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities with excellent support. Lessons are tailored to their specific needs and assessment is used very effectively to make sure they make good progress, whatever their ability. The excellent nurture group provides outstanding support for pupils who might otherwise find school life difficult and makes a significant contribution to their inclusion in school life and to their good academic and personal achievements.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

All leaders set themselves ambitious and challenging targets. There is a strong sense of teamwork and all adults help to identify weaknesses and improve provision where possible. The new headteacher has rapidly earned the approval and support of staff and parents, and is setting high expectations for standards to rise further and to improve good practice to outstanding practice. Strong and effective systems to track the progress of all pupils are in place and ensure that those in danger of falling behind are quickly identified and helped. Rigorous attention is paid to safeguarding issues. All policies are in place and reviewed annually. Training for all staff is up-to-date. Health and safety checks are strong and risk assessments are robust. Excellent partnerships with other schools and health agencies are highly effective in contributing to the curriculum and teaching and ensuring that expert assistance is available for pupils who need it.

The school is highly effective in tackling discrimination and ensuring pupils have equal opportunities to be successful. This is evident in the way in which the gap between girls and boys achievement has narrowed. The school promotes community cohesion well. Pupils have a good understanding of the local community and play a part in many local events such as the 'songbird choir'. Pupils have regular contact with two schools in Uganda and schools in South Africa and Shanghai.

Governors are fully involved in the life of the school. They take an active part in

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monitoring the school's work and in strategic development. They fully recognise the importance of working closely with the community. They bring a wide range of expertise to the school that is fully exploited for the benefit of the pupils. The school's relationship with parents is good and they have the opportunity to raise any concerns in regular meetings with teachers and the headteacher.

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	2
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	1
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. When they start in the Nursery their skills and abilities are in line with that expected for children of their age. All children make good progress in their learning, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, because of good teaching, a stimulating environment and expert assessment. By the time they enter Year 1, many children exceed the learning goals set for them.

Children make good progress in their personal development. This is seen particularly in children who have not experienced any pre-school setting: they quickly gain confidence and develop good relationships with adults and the other children. Children work and play well together, take great interest in the activities planned for them and learn to take responsibility for all they do. Children learn to look after each other playing indoors and out. Sometimes teachers are too directive and there is less scope for children to make their own choices.

Adults have a good knowledge of how children learn and develop. All welfare requirements are fully met and children thrive and flourish in this nurturing atmosphere.

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The environment is interesting, well-equipped and vibrant; it reflects children's interests well. Staffing levels are good and adults are deployed well so that they are able to effectively support children's learning. All children have daily access to the learning environment outdoors. Very secure assessment procedures ensure that all children are challenged to do well through the learning experiences planned for them.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led and managed. Self-evaluation is strong and considers the opinions and views of children, parents, carers and other interested partners. Any weaknesses are identified and dealt with. Safeguarding procedures are robust. Very strong and effective links between parents and staff mean that parents are fully involved in their children's care and education.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The large majority of parents are entirely satisfied with the school and praise many aspects of its work. Parents say their children are happy and that teaching is good. They praise the staff, commenting that they are very helpful and their work makes the school special. There is gratitude for the many extra activities organised and run by the staff. Parents speak about the 'happy atmosphere' and like the Friday celebration assemblies when, 'the whole school is filled with a feeling of pride for each child's and the school's achievements'. Parents are pleased that the school fosters a community spirit and appreciate the new ECO council. Some parents said that they would like more information about their children's progress between parents' evenings and reports. Inspectors agree and note that the school is responding to these comments and is planning to provide interim progress reports.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Priory CofE Primary 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 126 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 357 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	87	69	35	28	3	2	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	85	67	39	31	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	67	53	52	41	5	4	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	66	52	55	44	2	2	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	72	57	52	41	1	1	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	71	56	50	40	3	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	66	52	55	44	3	2	0	0
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)	62	49	57	45	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	67	53	55	44	1	1	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	71	56	47	37	4	3	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	49	39	71	56	3	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	67	53	56	44	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	88	70	36	29	1	1	0	0

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 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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

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 were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

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:	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. ■ 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 pupil's 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.



19 October 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Priory Church of England Primary School, Stoke-on-Trent ST4 8EF

Thank you so much for helping us when we came to inspect your school recently. We enjoyed meeting so many of you and observing you at work and play. You made us feel very welcome and made our short visit very enjoyable. This letter is to share with you what we found.

You go to a good school where you enjoy learning and taking part in many activities. You are making good progress and reaching average standards. Your behaviour is excellent; you have a very good understanding of how to live a healthy lifestyle and you feel totally safe and secure in school. Your attendance is good and you told us that you enjoy school and are proud to attend.

Teachers work hard to help you to learn and to make sure you enjoy school. All the adults in school take excellent care of you. Your school is well managed so that it runs smoothly and is steadily improving. To help you to make even better progress we have asked the school to do two things.

First, to help you to improve your writing by making sure your work is neat, tidy and accurate and to give you more chances to write at length. Second, to give you more information about the levels at which you are working and advice on how you can reach the next level.

You can play your part by continuing to do your best and making sure you take great care in the presentation of your work.

We wish you every happiness in the future

Yours sincerely

Mrs Judith Straw, on behalf of all the inspectors

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