

# Priory Primary School, Bicknacre

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	115000
<b>Local Authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	338490
<b>Inspection dates</b>	13–14 October 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Steven Hill

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	174
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	David Sandbach
<b>Headteacher</b>	Rachael Plunkett
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	8 March 2007
<b>School address</b>	Bicknacre Road Chelmsford CM3 4ES
<b>Telephone number</b>	01245 225450
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 18 lessons, taught by eight teachers. Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and other staff, groups of pupils, and the Vice Chair of the Governing Body. A number of parents were spoken to informally. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a variety of documentation, particularly that related to the tracking of pupils' progress, and to keeping them safe. Questionnaires were scrutinised from staff, older pupils and from 75 parents.

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

- To what extent do teachers plan different tasks for different pupils, and match these closely to their varying needs, particularly for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities?
- How well does the school promote community cohesion beyond the local area?
- How full a part do subject leaders play in monitoring their areas of responsibility and driving improvement?

## Information about the school

Priory is smaller than the average-sized primary school. Almost all the pupils are of White British origin and none speak English as an additional language. A higher-than-average proportion of pupils start or leave the school at other than the usual times. An unusually high proportion of the new arrivals in the last two years have had significant levels of special educational needs and/or disabilities. As a result, the proportion of pupils with statements of special educational needs is above average, particularly in the older classes. Three of the teachers in the school's seven classes started at the school in September.

There is a pre-school provision on the school's site, which is privately managed. This was inspected separately.

**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

The school provides a good education, so that all groups of pupils make good progress. Good care, guidance and support ensure that pupils are happy in school, form very good relationships with each other and with staff, and behave extremely well. Children make a good start to their education in the Reception class. In particular, the very strong relationships and high expectations developed there provide a very secure foundation for learning in later years. Throughout the school, pupils' positive attitudes to learning strongly support their good achievement, and their enjoyment of school is reflected in their high attendance. The school is a harmonious and thriving community, where pupils enjoy learning and greatly value the friendships which they make. All this supports community cohesion well, as do pupils' good involvement in events in the locality and some good developing links with schools abroad. However, the promotion of community cohesion is only satisfactory overall, because pupils have too few opportunities to interact with and learn about the wide variety of people from contrasting communities in this country.

The high levels of mobility among pupils and varied starting points in Reception mean that, despite good progress, standards in English and mathematics at the end of each key stage vary from year to year. Standards at the end of Year 2 have generally been average, or slightly above. The most recent provisional results of national assessments for Key Stage 1 were above average, with a major improvement in writing standards.

Overall attainment at the end of Year 6 has been broadly average. This is because of the changing nature of recent cohorts as they moved through Key Stage 2. A high proportion of pupils with significant special educational needs and/or disabilities have joined the school during Years 3 to 6. Such pupils receive a high level of pastoral and academic support that enables them to make good progress. Their relatively lower standards when they join the school, however, mean they do not reach the above-average standards of those who remain in the school throughout Key Stage 2. In addition, a small number of higher-attaining pupils have left over the same period. The recent provisional results of national tests at the end of Year 6 were a little above average overall but, as in previous years, standards in writing lagged behind those in reading and mathematics. These results, nonetheless, represent good achievement for the year group.

The key to pupils' good achievement at the school is good teaching. A particular strength is the consistent use of assessment information by teachers to match work to pupils' different needs. This is a major improvement since the last inspection. Pupils' progress and enthusiasm are enhanced by the school's good curriculum, including an excellent range of extra-curricular clubs. Good use is made of the limited range of equipment for information and communication technology (ICT) to ensure that pupils develop

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satisfactory skills. However, the lack of computers in the classrooms means that pupils have too few opportunities to use these skills across the curriculum.

The school is led and managed well. Good systems have enabled the school to maintain the good teaching despite recent, major staff changes. Self-evaluation is accurate and is based on much improved monitoring since the last inspection. Subject leaders now play a full part in this and successfully use the results to help their colleagues improve their practice. For example, the school has identified a lack of opportunities to write for different audiences and purposes, as well as a limited use of discussion and drama, as key factors in pupils' weaker progress in writing. All these elements demonstrate that the school is well placed to maintain and build upon its current good provision.

### **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Raise standards in writing for pupils in Key Stage 2, particularly by:
  - giving them more opportunities to use drama and discussion as a stimulus to writing
  - ensuring that pupils are clear about the purpose and audience for their writing, and that they have more practice in writing for different audiences.
- Provide more and better equipment so that pupils have increased opportunities to use their ICT skills to support learning in different subjects.
- Increase the school's contribution to community cohesion by giving pupils more opportunities to learn about and interact with the wide range of communities in the United Kingdom, particularly those which contrast with their own in terms of ethnicity, religion and socio-economic circumstances.

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

**2**

Achievement is good and is improving. All groups of boys and girls, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make similarly good progress. Children start in Reception with standards that, while varying from year to year, are usually in line with those expected nationally, although in some years they are lower. Attainment varies across the school because of this variation, but also because of the high mobility and the varying numbers of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Standards rose last year in writing at Key Stage 1 because of the successful use of a commercial programme to boost pupils' skills, concentrating on their understanding of letters and sounds. The school is now working to build on this improvement to raise writing standards in older classes.

In class, pupils make good progress. They settle quickly to work, try hard and concentrate well. For example, in an English lesson with Year 2, all pupils worked conscientiously on writing instructions for a game. They improved their skills in getting items into a logical order, as well as consolidating their writing skills. They responded positively to the teacher's high expectations by working hard, and their behaviour was outstanding. Similar outstanding behaviour was seen in an excellent mathematics lesson for Years 5 and 6. Pupils' enthusiastic desire to succeed helped them to cope with challenging tasks. Their great concentration, and persistence in the face of difficulties, meant they made excellent progress in their understanding of mathematical sequences.

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Pupils have good collaborative skills, and can work well independently when required. They are interested in the world around them, and have learned about art, dance and music from around the world. They enjoy exchanging ideas and emails with pupils from schools in France and China, for example. However, the opportunities they have to meet with pupils from different communities in this country have been limited. Pupils feel safe in school, exemplified by a group of Year 2 pupils who agreed that, 'The teachers all protect us.' Pupils have a secure understanding of how to keep themselves safe, and show this by following rules sensibly and by taking good care of each other. They know how to keep healthy, and put their understanding into practice well. This was illustrated when pupils in Year 4 were fully involved in a gymnastics lesson, throwing themselves energetically into the exercises. Pupils' attendance has been high for several years, and they are punctual. Together with their good progress in basic skills, and their positive attitudes to work, this helps prepare them well for their future lives.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	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
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	1
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

**How effective is the provision?**

Good teaching and learning underpin many of the strengths of the school. Teachers make their expectations clear and have good relationships with pupils, so that classes are orderly. Teachers present work in a lively fashion, and often use interactive whiteboards very effectively to clarify their explanations and to generate enthusiasm. They use a good range of strategies to involve all pupils, such as having them write their answers on

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individual whiteboards, and teachers make increasingly good use of discussion in pairs to ensure that all are engaged and interested. Most lessons feature a good pace so that a lot is covered in the time available. Just occasionally, teachers fail to generate any sense of urgency and the pace of learning slackens to be only satisfactory. The use of assessment is an increasing strength, with work usually tightly matched to the needs of individuals. Teachers and support staff carefully monitor pupils' ongoing progress in lessons, intervening effectively to help any who are confused, and encouraging all to refine and improve their work. Marking is satisfactory, often giving points for improvement, but teachers too seldom make sure that pupils follow these up.

New planning for the curriculum this term is making better links between subjects so that learning is more enjoyable and meaningful for pupils. This is starting to help raise standards in writing. However, the lack of computers in the classrooms means that integrating ICT work into other subjects is difficult. There is a good uptake of the many extra-curricular activities on offer, ranging from art, drama, chess, board games and 11-plus clubs, to football, cross-country running, volleyball and fencing.

The good care, guidance and support provided underpin pupils' strong personal development. Good manners and behaviour are continually stressed, and pupils are successfully encouraged to care for each other and to put a priority on friendship. Pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable are particularly well supported so that they can play a full part in the life of the school. Pupils who arrive at the school with high levels of special educational needs and/or disabilities receive particularly strong pastoral support, using the resources both within the school and drawing on high quality help from a range of outside agencies. This helps ensure that all pupils achieve well, regardless of their difficulties.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The headteacher provides a strong sense of direction to the senior leadership team and other staff with responsibilities. This has ensured that staff share a common approach. The monitoring of teaching, and a careful tracking of each individual pupil's progress, mean that all staff are held to account for their performance. Strengths and weaknesses are identified accurately and colleagues work together effectively to address the latter. The governing body has satisfactory systems to understand the school's performance, and has plans to make governors' visits more systematic to improve this.

There are good partnerships with parents and carers, who are given good information to help them contribute to their children's education. Regular newsletters, and advance

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information about events, keep parents well informed about school life. They are consulted about some important issues, and the school takes good account of their views. The school's links with other partners are good, with particular strengths in using the expertise of a wide range of outside agencies to help pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those whose circumstances might make them vulnerable. This, along with the good tracking of individuals' progress, is a major factor in the school's good provision to ensure equal opportunities and tackling discrimination for all, so that different groups all make good progress.

All the requisite procedures for safeguarding pupils are in place and up to date. However, the school has not devised procedures to take full account of the views of parents, carers and pupils when refining policies and practice. The promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory, despite some strengths, because of weaknesses in making links with different communities in the United Kingdom. Overall, the pupils' good achievement and personal development, including excellent behaviour, demonstrate that the school provides good value for money.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make good progress in the Reception class, because of good teaching and an interesting, practically-based curriculum. Teachers make good links between different activities so that learning is meaningful. A well-equipped outside area complements the wide range of activities that is available indoors. In most years children start with standards similar to those expected, and their attainment is above average at the end of Reception. Last year, attainment was broadly average as children went into Year 1, but many of that cohort started in Reception with overall standards significantly below those expected nationally.



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Children's social development is a particular strength, based on the very secure relationships they have with staff, so that they quickly settle into the class and enjoy themselves. Children are exceptionally well behaved and have extremely good concentration for their age. This is a particular strength when they sit and listen to adults, as was seen in an excellent lesson based on the nursery rhyme about the Queen of Hearts, when they learned about getting things in the right order. They listened raptly to explanations, and thoroughly enjoyed activities such as dressing up and role-playing the story, making and baking their own tarts, and arranging pictures of the events in a sequence.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led and managed, and staff work as an effective team. Induction arrangements are particularly strong, with excellent links apparent with parents and carers, and with the feeder pre-school. Assessment arrangements are good, and are used well to plan the next steps in each child's learning.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
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 vast majority of parents and carers are very positive about the school and what it does for their children. They particularly value that their children enjoy school and are safe there, and they appreciate the good quality of the teaching. A few parents and carers expressed concerns about the information they receive, the help they are given to support their children's learning, and the way in which the school deals with their concerns. The inspection team found that the systems in place to keep parents and carers informed were good. There are good arrangements to take account of their views, and clear examples of how their views have informed school policy, although this is not routinely in place in respect of safeguarding. Arrangements to involve parents and carers in their children's learning are good, and plans are in place to extend them through use of the internet.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Priory Primary School, Bicknacre 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 75 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 174 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	49	65	26	35	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	49	65	25	33	1	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	26	35	44	59	2	3	2	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	30	40	40	53	3	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	33	44	38	51	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	28	37	39	52	6	8	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	35	47	37	49	1	1	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)	30	40	37	49	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	31	41	41	55	2	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	23	31	44	59	3	4	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	17	23	44	59	4	5	3	4
The school is led and managed effectively	27	36	43	57	3	4	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	41	55	31	41	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 all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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:	<p>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.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



15 October 2010

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Priory Primary School, Bicknacre, Chelmsford, CM3 4ES**

Thank you very much for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school. You told us that you enjoyed school and we could see why. I expect this is why your attendance is so good.

You go to a good school, and you are making good progress because your teachers are good at helping you to learn. The older pupils are not doing quite as well in writing as in reading and mathematics, so we have agreed with your teachers that they are going to concentrate on helping you to improve your writing this year.

You do some good work on the computers in the suite, but you do not have much chance to use them in class to help with your other work. We have agreed with the staff that they are going to buy some more equipment, so you will have more chance to use computers in future.

Your behaviour is excellent and this makes the school a happy place to be, as well as helping you to learn. We were pleased to see how well you all get along together. You have learned a lot about different people around the world, but have not had much chance to meet or learn about different communities in this country, and we have asked the teachers to try to arrange this in future.

The adults are good at looking after you, keep a careful eye on how everyone is doing, and make sure that if anyone needs any extra help they get it. They are keen to make the school even better. You can help by keeping up your hard work and excellent behaviour, and by trying particularly hard with your writing.

We hope that you carry on enjoying life at Priory.

Yours sincerely

Steven Hill

Lead inspector

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