

# Priory Fields School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	118391
<b>Local Authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	358332
<b>Inspection dates</b>	11–12 October 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Alison Cartlidge

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>	280
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Brian Cope
<b>Headteacher</b>	Anne Siggins
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	14 May 2008
<b>School address</b>	Astor Avenue Dover CT17 0FS
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspection team observed 16 lessons taught by 11 teachers. Meetings were held with governors, parents, staff and pupils. The inspection team observed the school's work, and looked at pupils' books, information on pupils' progress, safeguarding policies and other documents. Questionnaires from 34 parents and carers were scrutinised.

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

- Achievement and challenge for the more able pupils and for boys in writing.
- How well behaviour is managed and its impact on learning.
- How effectively pupils who speak English as an additional language, especially the Gypsy/Roma pupils, are supported.
- The impact of middle managers and governors on improving and sustaining provision and progress.
- How pastoral support helps pupils to increase motivation and self-esteem.

## Information about the school

This primary school is larger- than- average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is high. The number of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above average. These pupils have a range of needs, including behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, moderate learning and speech and language difficulties. The school has a high proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language, and half are at the early stages of learning to speak English. The main home languages of these pupils are Slovakian/Czech and Polish. There is high mobility of pupils into school, particularly from the Gypsy/Roma community, with several arriving from or returning to Europe at short or no notice. The school has received several awards including the Healthy School Award.

**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?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**3**

## Main findings

This satisfactory and improving school provides pupils with a safe haven in which to learn. Good care, guidance and support and strong links with parents and carers and external agencies help pupils, including new entrants, to feel safe, enjoy school and to develop good self-esteem.

Well-focused teaching and clear routines help children in the Early Years Foundation Stage to make a good start to their education. In Years 1 to 6, teachers plan some interesting practical activities, but they do not always respond quickly and consistently when pupils start to lose concentration or misbehave. Pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, make satisfactory progress so that attainment by the end of Year 6 is broadly average. Pupils make best progress in reading. In mathematics, teachers do not always provide enough challenge for the more able pupils and boys are not consistent when writing because the work does not always engage their interest well enough. Pupils who speak English as an additional language, including those of Gypsy/Roma heritage, are given sound support so that they make similar progress to other pupils during their time at the school. Teachers mark pupils' work frequently and include praise and positive comments. They do not always ensure that comments or targets are used to move pupils' learning forward quickly. Pupils are good at keeping healthy and enjoy taking responsibility for various tasks around the school.

There are satisfactory procedures for self-evaluation that enable senior leaders to have a realistic understanding of what needs to be done next to improve the school. There are appropriate plans to increase the responsibility of middle managers so that they evaluate provision and progress for themselves and make more specific plans to help make provision and progress good in the subjects and aspects they lead. Improvements in attainment and progress since the last inspection, in the provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and a commitment to make learning more even across the school, demonstrate the school's sound capacity to improve further.

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

- Increase the proportion of good or better lessons by:
  - being consistent about how pupils should behave and listen
  - moving learning on quickly enough so that pupils remain interested and motivated throughout lessons
  - providing consistent guidance through marking and target setting on how pupils can improve their work.
- Raise attainment in writing and mathematics by:

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- ensuring there is always enough challenge for the more able pupils
- providing writing tasks that interest boys so that they always try to do their best work.
- Develop the role of middle managers in evaluating provision and progress so that they can form specific and manageable plans to make pupils' learning more even across the school.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****3**

A small minority of pupils are working within the levels expected for their age when they start school in the Early Years Foundation Stage, but most start school with skills and abilities in personal development, literacy and numeracy that are particularly low.

Most pupils enjoy school and are keen to talk to adults and their friends. For example, during a good discussion in Year 6, pupils were confident about sharing sensitive issues about 'being tolerant' and were able to express their worries freely. In most lessons pupils, including those who speak English as an additional language, build steadily on what they already know and make at least satisfactory progress. Pupils particularly enjoy practical or amusing activities. For example, in Years 1 and 2 pupils enjoyed guessing shapes from the clues they were given and used straws to construct their own shapes. Pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, make best progress in learning to read. In some lessons, learning slows when tasks do not interest the pupils well enough or are not challenging for the more able, particularly in mathematics. Girls do better than boys in writing, because boys do not always do their best work if the activity does not interest them well enough. Pupils from the Gypsy/Roma community are made to feel welcome, settle well and make sound progress during their time at the school.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Attainment has risen since the last inspection and is broadly average by the time pupils leave the school, although some pupils who have arrived in the school more recently do not reach the levels expected for their age. Behaviour is satisfactory and most pupils understand and follow the school rules. Pupils are nearly always polite and sensible, although some can misbehave in lessons when they are not interested in their work and not all pupils are good at concentrating. Attendance is broadly average although high mobility has an impact on rates of attendance and some parents choose to take their children on extended holidays. Pupils' satisfactory progress in developing literacy, numeracy and social skills prepare them satisfactorily for the next stage of education and later life.

Most pupils say that they feel safe at school and appreciate the way split playtimes have reduced upsets on the playground. They take responsibility well. For example, the school council is pleased with their choices for playground equipment and older pupils are proud that they act as buddies for children in the Reception classes. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is satisfactory. Pupils reflect on their feelings sensibly and have a sound awareness of various faiths. They take part in local festivals and sporting events and raise funds for charity. They show respect for each other and their knowledge of cultural diversity is developing satisfactorily. Pupils deserve the Healthy School Award because they enjoy keeping active at playtime and in the daily 'wake up and shake up' sessions. They feel well supported emotionally.

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*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>3</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>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>3</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?

Teachers plan interesting activities and explain the purpose of each lesson clearly. They use information and communication technology well to support learning and provide helpful guidance in displays around the classroom. While relationships between members of staff and the pupils are mainly strong, there are occasions when teachers are not consistent in their expectations for how pupils should behave and listen. In addition, they do not always move learning on quickly enough when pupils are no longer interested in an activity. For example, in one mathematics lesson, a group of pupils became bored with identifying shapes and started to lose concentration. The use of assessment is satisfactory, with constant use of praise to help motivate the pupils and build confidence. Pupils in Year 1 particularly enjoy giving successful pupils a 'super star' wave. Not all teachers provide consistent advice on how pupils can improve. Pupils like their targets but are not always clear about how well they are doing.

The curriculum is being developed so that there are more links between subjects and good use is made of the local area to add interest. The school is right to focus on the development of basic skills in literacy and numeracy and some interventions are used successfully to support pupils who are at risk of falling behind. For example, the school has recently started small-group daily sessions for those who speak English as an additional language, to boost their confidence in speaking English. Pupils appreciate the wide range of enrichment opportunities including clubs, themed weeks and educational

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visits. There is good support for pupils' personal development and they enjoy taking part in physical activities. Teachers are not always ensuring that the curriculum provides enough interest and challenge for all pupils, especially for boys in writing and the more able in mathematics.

Pupils, including those who have newly arrived in the country, are cared for, guided and supported well, enabling them to gain self-esteem and want to come to school. There are detailed care plans for vulnerable pupils and the breakfast club project supports a number of families including those who speak English as an additional language. Academic guidance is improving well, although it is not yet used consistently enough to always move learning forward swiftly.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

Senior leaders provide strong pastoral care for families and their children and manage the fluctuating school population well. Leaders embed ambition and drive improvement satisfactorily because they know what the school does well and how it should be improved. They have successfully improved the provision for children in the Reception classes and attainment and progress are improving securely in Years 1 to 6. The rate of learning is not yet consistent across the school and middle managers have not got a firm understanding of where new developments should be focused to improve the school more quickly. The school is active and effective in tackling discrimination and promotes equality of opportunity satisfactorily. It is addressing this with some success but has yet to ensure that all children make equally good progress in all lessons. Pupils come to the school from a wide range of cultural backgrounds and all feel welcomed and valued.

The enthusiastic governing body is increasing its involvement in setting priorities for improvement. At the time of the inspection, the school's safeguarding arrangements were found to be good and most parents agree that pupils are kept safe at school. Parents are positive about the school and typically make comments such as 'it's a very happy school'. Pupils who are finding life difficult are supported well. The partnership between the school and external agencies is good, enabling leaders and families to benefit from advice and support from various sources. While the school has some good activities for pupils to learn about life in other countries and the local area, the promotion of community cohesion is only satisfactory because pupils are not fully aware of cultural differences and how they affect lives.

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*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<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>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</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>3</b>

## **Early Years Foundation Stage**

Children make good progress in the Reception classes and attainment rises to being close to the national average when they start in Year 1. A strong focus on personal development and basic literacy skills raises attainment in these areas of learning especially well. For example, children enjoyed matching letters to the sounds they had learnt and putting the right number of candles on a cake. Members of staff have excellent arrangements for welcoming children and their parents when they first start coming to school so children settle quickly. Good relationships and clearly explained routines enable children to gain confidence, behave well and be enthusiastic about joining in with speaking and listening activities. Assessment is used well by the team of staff to plan and provide a good balance of stimulating activities that match the children's needs well.

Those who speak English as an additional language are supported through the use of signs, and a Slovakian/Czech-speaking teaching assistant helps children to participate fully. Children cooperate with each other sensibly and listen well. Leaders have been successful in improving Early Years provision since the last inspection and areas for improvement are identified and supported quickly. Leaders have suitable plans to increase the children's skills in planning their own ideas. Key workers have not been designated to support specific families and as a result there are occasions at the start of sessions when members of staff are under pressure to talk to all parents and carers wanting to speak with them.



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*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

Only a few parents and carers responded to the inspection questionnaire. Most of these are pleased with the school, especially that their children are kept safe. The inspection team also found this to be the case. A few parents and carers expressed concerns over the way behaviour is managed. The inspection team found that pupils' behaviour is satisfactory although there are a few occasions when teachers do not have high enough expectations of how pupils should behave in lessons.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Priory Fields 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 34 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 280 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	16	47	16	47	2	6	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	17	50	17	50	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	10	29	23	68	1	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	9	26	23	68	2	6	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	15	44	16	47	0	0	2	6
The school helps me to support my child's learning	11	32	21	62	0	0	2	6
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	10	29	22	65	2	6	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)	15	44	15	44	0	0	2	6
The school meets my child's particular needs	13	38	19	56	0	0	2	6
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	8	24	18	53	4	12	4	12
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	9	26	18	53	3	9	2	6
The school is led and managed effectively	11	32	18	53	0	0	4	12
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	16	47	14	41	0	0	2	6

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.**



13 October 2010

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Priory Fields School, Dover CT17 0FS**

We enjoyed coming to see your friendly school. Thank you for being so helpful during our visit. Your school provides you with a satisfactory standard of education. This means there are lots of things that it does well, but also there are some things that could be better.

These are the best things about your school

- You learn quickly in the Reception classes.
- You are good at staying healthy.
- We agree with you when you say that teachers are kind and look after you well.
- You are proud of your school and enjoy telling us about it.
- It is good that older pupils help as buddies.
- The headteacher and other leaders know what needs to be done to make the school better.

These are the things we have asked your school to improve

- Increase the number of good or better lessons by insisting you behave sensibly at all times, providing you with clear feedback on how to improve your work and moving you onto the next piece of work as soon as you have finished.
- Give those of you who are good at learning hard enough work, especially in mathematics.
- Make sure that activities involving writing are interesting and challenging, especially for the boys, so you can all do your best work.
- Help leaders to check how well you are doing so they can make certain that all of you are learning as well as you can.

Thank you once again for telling us about your school and letting us see your work. You could help your teachers by always listening carefully in class and doing your best writing.

Yours sincerely

Alison Cartlidge

Lead inspector

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