

Priorslee Primary Academy

Inspection report

Unique reference number	136439
Local authority	Not applicable
Inspection number	395325
Inspection dates	2–3 May 2012
Lead inspector	Deborah Udakis HMI

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

Type of school	Academy
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	332
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Glennis Mansell
Headteacher	Wendy Moore
Date of previous school inspection	27 November 2008
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Age group	4-11
Inspection date(s)	2–3 May 2012
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Introduction

Inspection team

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Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 25 lessons, seeing all 11 teachers and most teaching assistants. Discussions were held with the Principal, senior leaders including members of the governing body, parents and carers, staff and pupils. The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at self-evaluation documentation, monitoring and assessment information, lesson plans, evidence about the curriculum, and written policies. The inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line Parent View survey in planning the inspection. They analysed questionnaires from 114 parents and carers. The school's safeguarding procedures were also evaluated.

Information about the school

Priorslee Primary School converted to an academy in 2011. Upon conversion to academy status, the existing school closed and the new school opened in its place. Priorslee Primary Academy is a large school compared to others of the same type. It is a stable school, which includes Early Years Foundation Stage provision for Reception Year pupils. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below the national average.

The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage, with others coming from a range of minority ethnic groups and just a few being at the early stages of learning English. There is also a very small proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported at school action plus. Their needs predominantly relate to moderate learning difficulties. Last year, the school met the government's floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school. Pupils are thriving because the quality of teaching is predominantly good and there is some outstanding teaching. It is not an outstanding school because teaching is not consistently outstanding and there are pockets of satisfactory teaching.
- Leaders and managers at all levels are motivated, enthusiastic and highly skilled. They share high expectations and ambition for the pupils and their families. Strong and effective leadership of teaching and robust performance management support improvements well. The school has excellent capacity to improve as a result of the leaders' drive to succeed.
- Pupils' attainment is above the national average and pupils make good progress overall. Therefore, achievement is good. However, not all pupils know the next steps needed in their learning. Pupils are developing well the skills and understanding needed to become successful readers, writers, problem solvers, and communicators.
- Pupils behave well and feel safe in school. Throughout the school, pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to learning. Attendance has increased year on year over the last three years and is consistently well above the national average. Relationships with the large majority of parents and carers are trusting and supportive. However, a small number of parents and carers have raised concerns about the effectiveness of the school's communication with them.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop and implement the effective leadership strategies so that the overall effectiveness of the school is outstanding by the end of the summer term 2013 by:
 - ensuring that most teaching is outstanding, with nothing less than good
 - applying the school's marking policy consistently, so that all pupils know

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- and understand the next steps in their learning
- ensuring that teachers evaluate pupils' progress regularly at key points in lessons to promote maximum learning
- engaging with all parents and carers successfully and, in particular, those who have proven difficult to engage.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

In this new academy, pupils attain above the national average. In 2011, a small proportion of pupils in Year 6 made inadequate progress. Lesson observations during the inspection, teachers' assessments, and work in pupils' books show that almost all pupils make good progress and a few pupils make outstanding progress. Teachers' assessments show that pupils are on track to meet ambitious targets at the end of Key Stage 2 and that a significant proportion in Year 6 are likely to achieve Level 5 in English and mathematics. Most pupils, including younger pupils in Years 1 and 2, are very able readers and many read beyond their age expectations.

There are no significant differences in the achievement of different groups of pupils. Disabled pupils, those with special educational needs, and those new to learning English make similar progress to their peers within the school. They receive good-quality support which reinforces their good progress and learning in lessons.

Pupils start Reception Year with skills broadly in line with the levels expected for their age. They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and are well prepared for the next phase of their education. Highly reflective teachers monitor the progress of each child carefully and use their knowledge of individual children and their prior learning to plan and provide exciting and challenging activities. For instance, the topic 'The Queens Jubilee' captured the children's imagination as they developed their understanding of the Queen, her life and role through writing activities, imaginative play and creative activities. The strong and effective cross-curricular links established in Reception Year reinforce children's learning as they are taught phonics (the sounds letters make) discretely and develop their learning both indoors and outdoors.

Almost all parents and carers who responded to either the Ofsted questionnaire or completed the school's own satisfaction survey expressed positive views of their children's progress at the school. Most spoke very highly of the school and agree that their children are happy and are achieving well. Inspection evidence supports these views.

Quality of teaching

The majority of the teaching is good. There is some outstanding and some

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satisfactory teaching. In satisfactory lessons, pupils make less progress than they are capable of. Nevertheless, all those who responded to the pupils' questionnaire said they learn a lot in lessons. Many pupils spoke about their teachers with great affection. One pupil said 'I love my teacher. She is really good and makes learning fun'. Several pupils, when asked what they liked about school, said it was 'fun'. Most parents and carers agree that teaching is good at the school. In good or better lessons, teachers use imaginative teaching strategies and consider the needs of the pupils carefully and consciously at the planning stage. As a result, pupils are engaged and enjoy their learning.

In a guided reading lesson for pupils in Years 3 and 4, a pupil demonstrated his understanding of the text and spoke of how he could use newly learned adjectives in his story writing. This shows how pupils use their knowledge across the English curriculum. In most lessons, the learning is matched to the pupils' needs well and there is an appropriate level of challenge for the pupils. As a result, almost all pupils make good progress, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. In good and outstanding lessons, teachers are ambitious for all pupils and they make very effective use of accurate assessment to ensure that all pupils are challenged appropriately. For instance, in a lesson for pupils in Years 5 and 6, one pupil said that the level of challenge was 'just below too hard'. Some pupils are able to articulate their targets clearly, what level they are working at, and how they are going to improve. Several pupils refer to how they use the targets, for example, each time they start a new piece of writing. However, in some lessons, too little reference is made to the targets in order to maximise progress of each group of pupils and marking does not consistently reinforce the next steps in pupils' learning.

In the best lessons, pupils make rapid progress due to the outstanding teaching which is carefully targeted, focused on the specific learning needs of the individual pupils, and makes exceptional use of the time available and of the staff. In such examples, teachers are highly ambitious for their pupils and encourage pupils to become independent learners. For example, in a lesson in Key Stage 1, the pupils learned exceptionally well through inquiry and investigation and showed themselves to be resilient, curious and enthusiastic. The outstanding lessons, however, are in the minority.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is consistently good. There are examples of outstanding behaviour. Parents and carers who expressed a view, generally, agree that behaviour is good. Pupils say that they feel safe and secure at the school. They receive prompt and sensitive attention if they become ill or upset. According to pupils, bullying is not an issue in the school and they are confident that any unwelcome behaviour is dealt with quickly by adults.

There is a positive emphasis on pupils' friendships and peer support. During break times, pupils were observed taking responsibility for the well-being and care of each other and of their school. For instance, when a pupil fell over, two older pupils aided

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the child and looked after him. Pupils develop a strong sense of belonging within the school. They gain points for their 'school house' for specific achievement and behaviour, an initiative suggested by a parent. They develop a sense of duty and responsibility as they take on specific roles such as peer mediators, 'eco-warriors', play leaders. Through these roles, they aim to make break time more fun for everyone.

Extra-curricular activities support pupils' social, moral, cultural, and spiritual development. Pupils are able to access a range of creative and exciting activities including arts, drama, and sport. Adults and pupils treat each other with respect and good attention is paid to equality, inclusion, and pupils' individual circumstances. Pupils demonstrate that they are aware of how to stay safe. Issues of emotional well-being are reinforced within the curriculum. For instance, in a lesson in Years 3 and 4, pupils explored feelings of guilt and shame. In this good lesson, pupils showed an appreciation of feelings. They are developing a moral code as they explore complex and uncomfortable feelings with each other. The effective use of learning buddies and peer assessment in lessons is developing a climate and ethos of mutual respect and appreciation between pupils. The learning buddy programme has proved successful in helping to remove barriers to learning and improving pupils' progress and life skills. Attendance is consistently high and pupils arrive each morning on time and ready to learn.

Leadership and management

Senior leaders, including the governing body, communicate high expectations and ambition for the school. The school has emerged from a significantly unsettling period during the last year. The school's strong leadership team has taken appropriate steps to deal with underperformance resulting in changes to staff and new appointments. The school is forging ahead with actions to consolidate the positive changes. For instance, there are very effective systems in place to monitor and improve the quality of teaching and these are having an increasingly positive impact on pupils' progress and learning. Leaders are convincing in their ambitions and enthusiasm to improve the school further and instil high professional standards. The appointment of new leaders is having a positive impact on the curriculum, including exciting extra-curricular activities. The curriculum supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development and their good progress. However, the full effect of the new curriculum is yet to be discovered as it becomes increasingly embedded. There are clear ambitions and strategies in place to drive further improvement. The school's capacity to improve is excellent.

Leaders and staff ensure that the school is fully inclusive and take positive steps to overcome barriers to learning and challenge discrimination. Disabled pupils, those with special educational needs, those who are new to learning English, and those from diverse backgrounds are supported well in their learning. Safeguarding arrangements are robust.

Most parents and carers who responded to Ofsted's questionnaire stated they are

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satisfied with the school and their children's progress and they say their children are safe in school. One parent said 'My child has really thrived in the school'. Another said 'Communication is really good and helpful.' However, some parents and carers do not believe that communication is as effective as it could be. Despite the numerous strategies currently in place to support relationships and links with parents and carers, the school is having difficulty securing the support of some families who are proving hard to engage.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



4 May 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Priorslee Primary Academy, Telford, TF2 9RS

Thank you for making us feel so welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking with you and seeing all the exciting things you do each day. We think your school is good. Leaders and teachers are working hard to fire your imagination and love of learning and the results of this are seen throughout the school. The adults are very skilled at caring for you, keeping you safe, and making sure you do well in everything you do. They are good at knowing how to make things even better. These are just some of the things we found are good at your school.

- It is a very friendly and safe place in which to work and play. You said that you feel safe at school and that bullying is not a problem. You are supported to make good friendships and the peer mediators and playtime leaders help you to look out for each other.
- You make good progress in your learning and you have very good attitudes to your learning. Many of you are strong readers and it was a delight to hear some of you read.
- You enjoy school very much because your teachers are good at making sure there is always something to interest you. There is a wide range of exciting after-school activities to support your learning and development.
- You concentrate hard at everything you do. You are caring and kind and work well together. You are curious and use your imagination very well indeed. Your behaviour is consistently good and is sometimes outstanding. Well done!
- You come to school each day ready to learn. You are rarely late, if ever, and attendance is very good.

We have asked the Principal to help you learn even more. We have asked leaders at your school to make sure that all of you learn as much as possible by ensuring all teaching is good or better, that you have more opportunities to assess your learning in lessons, and that you know your next steps in learning. You can help by always working as hard as you can.

Yours sincerely

Deborah Udakis

Her Majesty's Inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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