

Pyrgo Priory School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	102320
Local authority	Havering
Inspection number	376694
Inspection dates	21–22 May 2012
Lead inspector	Martin Beale

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	397
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mark O'Brien
Headteacher	Glenn Lucas
Date of previous school inspection	23–24 June 2009
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Age group	3–11
Inspection date(s)	21–22 May 2012
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Introduction

Inspection team

Martin Beale

Additional Inspector

Lynn Lowery

Additional Inspector

Linda Chesworth

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Over 10 hours were spent observing teaching and learning in parts of 24 lessons taught by 14 members of staff. Inspectors held discussions with pupils about their learning and heard pupils read. They met with staff and members of the governing body, including the Chair. They observed the school's work, and scrutinised pupils' books, assessment data and case studies of specific pupils. The inspection team also looked at evidence of the school's self-evaluation and improvement planning. Questionnaires returned by 74 parents and carers were analysed.

Information about the school

Pupil numbers are rising in this large primary school. A quarter of pupils are from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds, including a small number of Traveller children. Few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average as is the proportion with disabilities and those with special educational needs supported with additional help at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs. More pupils than in other primary schools join or leave other than at the usual times. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a Nursery and two Reception classes and pupils at Key Stage 2 are taught in six mixed-age classes. The school has received the Primary Quality Mark for Basic Skills teaching. The school meets the current floor standards, which set the government's minimum expectations for attainment and progress. The headteacher has been appointed since the last inspection, as have several other members of staff.

The school hosts a privately run after-school club. This provision is not managed by the governing body and as such is 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	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. The engagement with parents and carers is one of its key strengths and contributes significantly to the pupils' successful learning and development. The school is not outstanding because progress is only satisfactory in the Early Years Foundation Stage and boys achieve less well than girls, especially in writing. Not all teaching is consistently of good quality across the school.
- Pupils make good progress by Year 6 from their starting points and from whatever time they join the school. Attainment is broadly average in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6. The pupils' writing has improved and become more imaginative because of changes introduced this year. Pupils deepen their mathematical understanding when applying their skills in solving problems, although questioning skills to check pupils' understanding could be improved.
- At its best, teaching is engaging and stimulates the pupils' imaginations. Most lessons move learning forward at a fast pace in calm and well-managed classrooms. However, not all teachers are clear in planning and explaining to pupils what they are to learn in lessons rather than what they are to do, and marking in mathematics does not consistently help pupils improve their work.
- Pupils feel safe in school and their good behaviour and positive attitudes make the school a harmonious and purposeful environment in which to learn and develop. Pupils respond well to their teachers, enabling lessons to flow smoothly. They undertake responsibilities as prefects, school council representatives and play leaders with pride.
- The school is well placed to improve further. The headteacher is building on the school's successes in recent years, ably supported by skilled subject leaders and an effective governing body. Teaching is improving through the continuous drive on managing the performance of staff and by teachers working closely together to share their expertise.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of good and better teaching in order to accelerate learning and progress by:
 - developing teachers' explanations and questioning skills to check pupils' understanding
 - providing more effective feedback through marking in mathematics on the steps pupils need to take to meet their targets
 - basing lesson planning on what the pupils are expected to learn in each lesson rather than on the activities to be undertaken
 - increasing the pace of learning in lessons to develop pupils' knowledge and skills in using letters and sounds.

- Raise the achievement of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - ensuring that all children, and particularly boys, stay engaged with tasks and learn to share, take turns and work collaboratively
 - making more effective use of the outdoor environment so that children's learning is linked more closely to their activities inside the classroom
 - providing more opportunities for children, especially boys, to develop their writing through activities both inside and outdoors.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Inspection evidence supports the strongly held view of parents and carers that their children make good progress, although this is less consistent in the lower years than at Key Stage 2. Year 6 test results fell in 2010 but rose again in 2011 to a broadly average level. Almost all pupils reached the nationally expected Level 4, giving them a firm platform for success at secondary school. Fewer pupils exceeded this level in mathematics than in English, but action taken this year has closed this gap.

Children make satisfactory progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage from skills below those expected for their age on entry, particularly in literacy and numeracy. Attainment remains below average by the end of Reception, particularly in these two areas, and the gap between boys and girls in writing emerges here. The emphasis on promoting the children's personal development does not consistently ensure that all boys learn to take turns, share resources and work constructively with others.

Typically, pupils develop new skills quickly, and consolidate these well by their application in different contexts, such as when solving problems. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 used their understanding of place value well to order whole numbers up to 1000 and pupils in Year 6 discussed how to add two amounts of money quickly when solving complex problems. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs also make good progress. Carefully planned actions to meet their targets enable these pupils to access all areas of learning.

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The school's action to improve writing is leading to accelerating progress, particularly at Key Stage 2. As a result, the gap between boys' attainment and that of boys nationally has closed significantly. Contexts for writing are engaging because they are linked closely to topic themes or the book being studied. For example, pupils in an upper ability Year 6 group created a 'freeze-frame' of a scene from 'Floodland' to stimulate ideas for extending the use of complex sentences in their writing. The development of early reading skills such as letters and sounds is satisfactory, but attainment in reading is below average by the end of Year 2. The pupils' progress accelerates at Key Stage 2 so that attainment in reading is broadly average by the end of Year 6. Many pupils develop a genuine love of literature as they get older; one Year 6 girl said, 'I am passionate about reading.'

Quality of teaching

Many of the qualities of the most effective teaching were observed in an absorbing Year 6 English lesson. This supports the strongly held view of parents, carers and their children that teaching is good. High expectations were reflected in careful planning, engaging methods and a high level of challenge. The teacher was explicit about what the pupils were to learn, rather than what was to be completed as was seen in some other lessons. The teacher's dynamic style motivated the pupils, generating pace throughout the lesson. Pupils were given many opportunities to practise a range of skills as they identified the types of text used in non-fiction. The teacher's skilled questioning sustained their interest and moved learning forward rapidly, but this is not a consistent feature of all lessons. Marking of writing generally across the school contributes significantly to the pupils' good progress. As leaders have recently identified, this is not the case in mathematics, as marking does not consistently help pupils understand their targets and the steps needed to achieve them.

Reading is taught well and more effectively at Key Stage 2 than in lower years. Sessions teaching letters and sounds to younger pupils move their learning forward at no more than a sound pace. Lessons are planned well to develop other reading skills, such as comprehension, and promote an interest in different forms of literature. The most effective teaching observed encouraged pupils to be creative and stimulated their imaginations when responding to literature. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 greatly enjoyed watching, on video, the performance of a poem in Jamaican dialect by the poet herself, before looking closely at her other poems. Teachers also promote teamwork well, through collaboration on tasks and in discussion.

The specific difficulties of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are identified swiftly and action is taken to meet pupils' individual targets. Teaching assistants make a significant contribution to meeting the learning needs of individuals.

Teachers in the Nursery and Reception classes plan interesting activities covering all areas of learning through themes such as 'The Jubilee'. However, they do not ensure that boys persevere with tasks for long enough and not all activities outside have a

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clear purpose or link to learning indoors.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils show respect for others and are aware of the impact of their actions. Individuals go out of their way to help others, showing initiative when organising lunchtime activities to help pupils develop their mental arithmetic skills through computer games and helping newcomers settle in quickly. Pupils are mostly keen to learn, concentrate hard and show determination when tackling difficult work, although a small number of boys do give up too easily. There are many success stories of pupils who have more difficulty in managing their own behaviour being helped to modify their conduct through individual support and guidance. Records confirm that, with the exception of a few isolated incidents, the good behaviour seen during the inspection is typical for the school.

Pupils say how safe they feel in school, which is a view supported by their parents. Pupils are aware how to keep themselves safe when using new technology and the internet and through road safety training. They understand what constitutes bullying and say there are a few isolated incidents of name-calling or unhappiness when friends fall out. They are confident when any poor behaviour or bullying does occur that the school takes it seriously and sorts it out quickly. Parents and carers concur with this view. The school's rigorous action leads to rising attendance as pupils move up through the school, although not all parents and carers support the school's drive to improve attendance and punctuality. Several Traveller children have almost full attendance this year but rates vary.

Leadership and management

Equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination are firmly at the heart of the school's work. The headteacher and governors are determined that all members of staff remain fully focused on identifying and breaking down potential barriers that might impede learning and development. At the same time, the rigorous monitoring of teaching and analysis of assessment data identify where improvement is needed on an individual as well as a collective basis. Personalised training such as observing good practice by working alongside experts has helped maintain good quality teaching. Consequently, any gaps in performance, such as in boys' writing or between English and mathematics at higher levels, are closing rapidly.

The governing body is both challenging and supportive. It is fully involved in planning for the school's future and holding the headteacher and staff accountable for improving its performance. Governors take very seriously their responsibility for ensuring that safeguarding requirements are met and implemented effectively. Pupils and their circumstances are well known because of the close liaison with families and the sensitive mentoring of pupils. This enables the school to target action carefully when signs of underachievement emerge or in support of Traveller children, almost all of whom are fully engaged in school life.

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The curriculum emphasis is on the development of pupils' basic skills and on their application in different subjects. Linking learning through themes such as 'Olympics' or 'The Jubilee' brings learning to life. Art and music are major features of school life and contribute significantly to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Provision for sport benefits from lessons and clubs run by the school's sports coach. Provision for information and communication technology includes the recent investment in programmable technology. Pupils have many opportunities to learn about different peoples and cultures. These broaden horizons and help pupils to understand how others live and their place in the world.

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.



23 May 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Pyrgo Priory School, Romford RM3 9RT

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave the inspection team when we visited your school recently. We saw that you work hard and are proud of the part you play in school life. Inspectors were particularly impressed by your confident answers to their questions. We found that Pyrgo Priory is a good school. These are the things we liked most.

- As you told us, the headteacher, staff and governors take care of you and make sure you are kept safe.
- Teaching is good, particularly at Key Stage 2, and in almost all lessons teachers make sure you can learn in a calm atmosphere.
- Your positive attitudes to learning and good behaviour contribute significantly to making the school calm and happy.
- Your writing has improved considerably, partly because you are given opportunities to develop your skills in a wide range of subjects.
- The school has formed strong links with your parents and carers to support your learning.
- You understand clearly how to keep yourselves safe and deal with any risks you might face.

In order to improve learning further, we have asked your school to bring teaching consistently up to the quality of the best and to increase the progress of the children in Nursery and Reception.

You can play your part in helping the school to get even better by continuing to work hard. Some of you also need to improve your attendance and punctuality.

Yours sincerely

Martin Beale
Lead inspector

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