

# The Priory Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	131212
<b>Local authority</b>	Sandwell
<b>Inspection number</b>	395531
<b>Inspection dates</b>	28–29 June 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Peter Kerr

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>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	229
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Andrew Farrington
<b>Headteacher</b>	Felicity Somervell
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	3 December 2008
<b>School address</b>	Dorsett Road Friar Park Wednesbury WS10 0JG
<b>Telephone number</b>	0121 5561383
<b>Fax number</b>	0121 5560520
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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	28–29 June 2012
<b>Inspection number</b>	395531



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## Introduction

Inspection team

Peter Kerr

Additional Inspector

Brenda Jones

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 11 lessons taught by eight teachers. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and senior members of staff. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at curriculum planning, monitoring files, records of pupils' progress and the school's self-evaluation. They also took account of responses to the inspection questionnaire received from 74 parents and carers.

## Information about the school

This is an average-sized primary school. Nearly half the pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals, which is a high proportion compared to most primary schools. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is similar to that found in the majority of primary schools. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs who are supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average. The main areas of need currently identified by the school are behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, speech, language and communication needs and moderate learning difficulties. For the past two years, the school has been led and managed by an acting leadership team, including an acting headteacher and two acting deputy headteachers. Some classes have been taught by teachers on temporary contracts during this period. A permanent headteacher has been appointed and will take up the post in September 2012. An independently managed children's centre shares the site and building with the school.

The school meets the current floor standards, which are the minimum standards for attainment and progress expected by the government.

**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

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>3</b>

## Key findings

- This is a satisfactory school. It is not yet good because progress is too slow in writing, more-able pupils are not challenged consistently enough, and monitoring by leaders is not rigorous enough. Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.
- Most children’s skills and levels of development are well-below age-related expectations on entry to the Nursery. Attainment is below average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Attainment is lower in writing than in mathematics and reading. Progress is satisfactory. Pupils like school, work hard and collaborate effectively. The nurture group helps pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties to learn as well as their peers.
- Teaching is satisfactory. The best lessons challenge all abilities as teachers use assessments to plan suitable starting points for low- and high-attaining pupils. Not all lessons do this. Teachers give pupils good opportunities to fully express themselves on occasions but not consistently so. Reading and spelling are taught systematically, but marking does not always help pupils improve their skills. Best use is not yet made of the library and other resources to promote reading and writing and encourage independent research and study.
- Behaviour is consistently good. Pupils are confident, well-mannered and considerate and they know how to stay safe. Girls, boys and pupils of all ethnic backgrounds get on very well together. Pupils enjoy carrying out a range of responsibilities around the school.
- The acting headteacher has maintained the support of parents and carers and developed a strong sense of community. The leadership team has introduced useful measures to improve the quality of teaching, but some roles are unclear and monitoring is not extensive or rigorous enough to manage teachers’ performance and ensure consistent implementation of improvement initiatives.

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

- Raise standards in writing by:
  - providing more regular opportunities for pupils to fully express themselves in lessons and supporting them to improve their spoken language skills
  - using marking more consistently to indicate success against specific criteria for each pupil and showing what the next steps are to improve
  - ensuring that all pupils know what their own targets for improvement in writing are and how well they are doing
  - helping pupils to read more widely for pleasure to stimulate their imaginations and encourage them to write.
  
- Improve progress for all pupils and especially the more-able by:
  - ensuring that assessments are used more consistently to plan suitably challenging starting points for each ability group in lessons, particularly the more-able and lowest-attaining pupils
  - questioning pupils more consistently as they work and challenging them to do more demanding tasks if appropriate
  - providing more opportunities for pupils to extend their studies independently, including through the use of the library.
  
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
  - ensuring that each member of the leadership team has a clear and manageable remit relating to school improvement
  - rigorously monitoring and evaluating the implementation of initiatives to ensure consistency in practice throughout the school
  - providing sufficient training and support for staff to effectively fulfil their roles in school improvement
  - ensuring that the school uses its learning resources, such as the library, more effectively to support learning and personal development for all age groups across the curriculum.

## Main report

### Achievement of pupils

Parents and carers say that their children make good progress. The inspection found that progress is no better than satisfactory because it is not consistent between subjects and year groups and across the ability range.

Children make good progress in most areas of learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage because they learn enjoyably and independently for much of the time. Playing in the extensive outdoor area helps them to make good progress in their physical development. They show good levels of independence and relate well to each other. Their progress in communication, language and literacy and mathematical

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development is satisfactory, but many do not reach the early learning goals in these areas by the end of Reception. Pupils' skills on entry to Year 1 are, therefore, significantly below average in reading, writing and mathematics

Attainment is below average in reading at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Progress is quicker in reading than in mathematics and writing in both Key Stages. This is because all teachers consistently follow the school's policy on reading which provides reading materials of systematically increasing difficulty for each pupil. Provision for building on pupils' writing and mathematical skills is not as consistent and, therefore, not as effective. Pupils learn letter sounds satisfactorily but some older pupils sound out letter sounds incorrectly when encountering unfamiliar words despite having been taught correctly, reducing their capacity to read fluently and spell correctly. Many older pupils in Key Stage 2 have very limited experience of books and do not read much beyond their set texts. Few pupils were observed using the library or choosing to read books in classrooms during the inspection.

Pupils are enthusiastic communicators, but many lack fluency in formal situations. They enjoy collaborating, and enthusiastic and focused discussion was a feature of the good learning seen in some lessons. For example, pupils in Year 3 wrote convincing imaginative accounts of what it might have been like to be evacuated in the Second World War because they were supported in discussing their ideas first, planning their writing, and then evaluating their own and their classmates' efforts. This learning improves when adults join in discussions and get the pupils to fully explain themselves. Learning slows when adults intervene too quickly to supply words or complete sentences for pupils.

Pupils with behavioural, emotional and social needs make good progress towards personal development targets in the nurture group because the provision is closely tailored to their identified needs. This helps them cope independently in class and learn at a similar rate to others. Pupils with speech, language and communication needs and those with moderate learning difficulties make satisfactory progress. They work enthusiastically, often with staff support, persevere well and enjoy success and praise.

More-able pupils learn well in lessons that challenge them to extend their skills. For example, when pupils in Year 2 were learning about numbers that add together to make ten, more-able pupils extended this technique to larger numbers with staff support while lower-attaining pupils consolidated the skill with smaller numbers. In contrast, more-able pupils in Key Stage 2 found a worksheet requiring them to add prices of commodities and work out the change too easy. They had the capacity to use counting on to give change correctly but had no opportunity to use and improve this skill because they had to complete the same task as all other pupils in the class.

Nearly one in five pupil respondents to the questionnaire said that they did not always know how well they are doing. In discussions, pupils were more informed about their progress in mathematics than in English.

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## Quality of teaching

The great majority of parents and carers say that their children are taught well. The inspection found that teaching is no better than satisfactory because the full range of pupils' needs is not always met in lessons. A balance of good and satisfactory teaching was seen during the inspection.

In the best lessons, communication skills are encouraged and tasks are matched to pupils' abilities. For example, in a mathematics lesson in Year 3, pupils worked collaboratively to solve problems relating to evacuees' travel. Progress was good across the ability range because lower-attaining pupils used practical apparatus to help their thinking while more-able pupils discussed solutions independently. Staff circulated, listening to conversations and prompting refinements to methods.

Lessons that are less effective provide fewer opportunities for pupils to explain their thinking and discuss options with their peers because staff supply explanations and suggestions for them too readily. More-able pupils sometimes have skills beyond the demands of the tasks, while some of the lower-attaining pupils need too much support to accomplish them. For most of the time, the tasks given to pupils with moderate learning difficulties or speech, language and communication needs meet their needs satisfactorily because they can accomplish them successfully with appropriate adult support.

Teachers plan opportunities for pupils to develop skills across the curriculum, including through writing poetry and other imaginative pieces, engaging in mathematical problem solving and scientific experiments, and producing computer presentations of research findings. Some of the written work is of good quality but marking does not consistently indicate why work is good and what the next steps are to improve further. Lessons promote most aspects of personal development well, particularly self-confidence, personal relationships and respect for each other.

## Behaviour and safety of pupils

Although a few pupils and parents and carers say that poor behaviour occasionally disrupts lessons, the pupils' behaviour is typically at least good and often exemplary in the vast majority of lessons and around the school. The pupils' excellent relationships with each other and positive attitudes to work were evident in all classrooms during the inspection, and their enthusiasm for singing enlivened their rehearsal for the upcoming music festival. The pupils take their responsibilities seriously and can be trusted to discharge them independently. For example, two pupils in Year 1 needed no supervision when feeding the chickens and carried out the task very competently.

Any incidents of bullying or other forms of intimidation, including racist remarks, are recorded and dealt with appropriately. These are very rare, however, and in discussion pupils were adamant that no-one is in danger of discrimination or bullying. The school is exceptionally harmonious in this respect. Pupils feel very safe in school.

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They know all the rules regarding their safety on the site and can say how they keep safe on the roads and at home. They know how to live healthy lifestyles and are suitably informed about the dangers to health posed by drugs and alcohol.

Attendance has improved from below to above average over the past two years.

### **Leadership and management**

The present leadership team has worked well to develop the ethos of the school. The governing body fulfils its role satisfactorily. It has acted effectively to ensure continuity in the school during the absence of a substantive headteacher and offers good support to the whole staff.

Performance management is satisfactory. The governing body challenges the acting headteacher to relate resources to pupils' achievements. The coaching model has contributed to improved teaching by clearly identifying individual strengths and areas for improvement and identifies continuing professional development needs. Gaps in the oversight of some areas of school improvement have developed as a result of the extended temporary tenure of leadership posts, the diversity of roles that individuals fulfil and overlapping responsibilities. Not all staff feel fully qualified to discharge all their responsibilities and monitoring has not been as rigorous as planned. Members of the leadership team are fully aware of these weaknesses and have a clear view on how they can be addressed.

The introduction of a thematic curriculum has led to pupils applying their skills more widely. Good use is made of the outdoor areas to enrich the pupils' learning, for example by growing vegetables and looking after chickens. Some other facilities, particularly the library, are not so well utilised. The school recognises that this resource needs to be better used and has appointed a librarian for next term.

The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is monitored and supported satisfactorily and gaps are identified. The school strongly encourages respect for the individual and a sense of self-worth, and encourages pupils to reflect on the wonders of nature, for example, through study of space and the planets. A strong moral code and excellent relationships pervade the school. Leaders have identified a weakness in pupils' knowledge of the wider society and are at the early stages of planning to address it.

Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements and the school has a strong and effective commitment to equality of opportunity for all. It is particularly effective in supporting children from families that find it difficult to send their children to school.



## 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](http://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.**



2 July 2012

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of The Priory Primary School, Wednesbury, WS10 0JG**

Thank you for welcoming us so warmly into your school. You were a delight to be with.

Yours is a satisfactory school. You enjoy coming to school, work hard and behave well. You make satisfactory progress but should be doing better in writing. Also more of you could reach higher levels in your work generally. Your teachers have worked hard to make your school a very pleasant place in which to learn, both indoors and outdoors. We particularly liked the vegetable garden and the chickens. You look after them well. You know all the hygiene and safety rules and how to keep yourselves safe outside school. Your lessons are interesting and help you to learn about a lot of things. You say you know your targets in mathematics but you are not so sure about English. We have asked your teachers to do the following things to make your school even better and to help you to achieve as well as you can:

- make sure that you all have to think and work as hard as you can in lessons, even the most able of you
- give you more help to improve your writing when they mark your books
- encourage you to read more and to enjoy lots of different books.

We have also asked the headteacher and other senior staff to check carefully that these things are done well in every class.

You can help by always working as hard as you can, continuing to show an interest in everything around you and exploring books at any opportunity.

I wish you all well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Peter Kerr  
Lead inspector

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