

# Priory Junior School

Longsands Road, St Neots, PE19 1TF

**Inspection dates** 25–26 October 2012

|                                |                      |              |          |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|--------------|----------|
| <b>Overall effectiveness</b>   | Previous inspection: | Satisfactory | 3        |
|                                | This inspection:     | <b>Good</b>  | <b>2</b> |
| Achievement of pupils          |                      | Good         | 2        |
| Quality of teaching            |                      | Good         | 2        |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils |                      | Good         | 2        |
| Leadership and management      |                      | Good         | 2        |

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- The standards pupils reach in English and in mathematics are well above national levels by the time they leave the school in Year 6.
- The quality of teaching is consistently good, especially in the way teachers use questions, so that all pupils, including those who need extra help, make good progress.
- Pupils feel safe in the school, and their parents say that their children are well cared for.
- Under the skilful leadership of the headteacher, staff work together very well to a common purpose.
- Pupils' behaviour in and around school is good. Almost all show positive attitudes to learning in lessons.
- Teaching continues to improve because the headteacher and other leaders are giving teachers accurate feedback after watching them teach and providing them with useful training that helps to improve their skills.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Although pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals make good progress in English and mathematics from their starting points, the standards they reach are not as high as they are for all other pupils.
- Pupils' standards in writing are not as good as those in reading and mathematics.
- The work that teachers set in lessons for those pupils who are more able does not always provide enough challenge for them to make the best progress they could.
- Governors are not as fully aware of the views of parents and carers as they could be because they do not regularly and systematically seek their views.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 16 lessons taught by eight teachers.
- Meetings were held with two groups of pupils, senior leaders, staff, a representative of the local authority and members of the governing body.
- Inspectors talked with pupils, listened to them read and observed them at play.
- The school’s safeguarding policies, improvement plans, governing body meeting notes and records of pupils’ behaviour were looked at carefully. In addition, inspectors looked at the work pupils were doing in their books and at records of their progress.
- Inspectors took account of the 21 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and replies from 21 staff questionnaires. A member of the inspection team listened to the views of parents and carers at the start of the school day.

## Inspection team

Sarah Warboys, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Peter Heaton

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is an average-sized junior school.
- A below-average proportion of the pupils are eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding to the school. The funding is based on the number of children at the school in local authority care and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The percentage of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs who are supported by school action is average as is the proportion supported by school action plus or with a statement of educational needs.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school has been awarded the Basic Skills Quality Mark.
- A before- and after-school club, managed by the governing body, operates on the school site.

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

- Raise attainment in writing so that it is more aligned with above average standards in reading and mathematics. Build on recent, successful initiatives to plan interesting activities that provide pupils with opportunities to use their writing skills while they are learning about other subjects.
- Provide extra help to the small minority of pupils in every year group who are known to be eligible for free school meals so that they reach similar standards to all other pupils.
- Make sure that in lessons, teachers provide more demanding work for those pupils that are more able.
- Strengthen governance by ensuring that members of the governors gain a good understanding of the views of parents and carers by regularly seeking their views about the school and its work.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils join the school with skills in English and mathematics that are above those expected for their age. By the time they leave the school in Year 6, the standards pupils reach in reading and mathematics are on average, two terms ahead of where they should be. Although similar to the levels reached by most pupils nationally, attainment in writing is not as far ahead. All pupil groups make good progress in English and mathematics year on year.
- Additional funding received by the school has been used successfully to provide one-to-one tuition, access to educational trips, additional resources and extra help in lessons for those who are supported by the pupil premium. Consequently, they make good progress, particularly in Year 6. In every year group, the standards these pupils reach in reading, writing and in mathematics are not as high as they are for other pupils.
- Pupils enjoy reading. The school's reading records show that in every year group, most pupils are on average, at least two terms ahead of where they should be. They make good progress in reading because they are taught precise reading skills on a regular basis. Those who need additional support for reading are provided with extra help from adults individually or in small group work during lessons.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress. This is because of the way they are supported in lessons by teachers and other adults. The work that teachers set for these pupils is adapted well and meets their needs effectively. Adults use a variety of resources to interest them. They make certain that activities are planned to address specific gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills.

### The quality of teaching is good

- In all lessons, there are good relationships that support good learning. Teachers and other adults value pupils' contributions in discussions. They praise and encourage them for their efforts. A particular strength of the teaching observed during the inspection lies in the quality of the questions all adults use with pupils. They use a range of searching questions that enable pupils to clarify their thinking and practice their answers before sharing them with the class.
- In the best lessons, teachers have high expectations of behaviour and learning. Teaching assistants are used well and provide good quality support to individual pupils or small groups. Colourful resources help pupils to understand and learn difficult ideas. Teachers make good use of new technology, such as interactive whiteboards, to grab pupils' interest and motivate them.
- On the whole, teachers use assessment information to plan activities for pupils that are closely matched to their needs, interests and abilities. In some lessons, however, the work that is set does not match their abilities closely enough. The more able pupils, in particular, are not given hard enough work to do and this limits the progress they could make.
- Teachers' marking of pupils' work helps pupils to learn quickly from their mistakes and to move on faster. Teachers very clearly identify for pupils what they have done well and what they need to do to improve. Pupils are given plenty of time to act upon the advice they are given or to complete the examples teachers set and this helps them to understand what is required.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well in whole-school and

classroom activity. For example, in Year 5, pupils worked well together and developed their skills in design and technology making models of the 'Mary Rose' ship alongside learning about the Tudor Dynasty.

- Pupils regularly assess their own work and that of others. They provide tactful and helpful feedback to each other as to how they might improve their writing. Those from different backgrounds play well together and show pride in singing together as a whole school. They clearly appreciate the power music has to create different moods.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- Pupils' behaviour is good. They are polite, courteous and helpful as they move in and around the school. Most pupils show positive attitudes to learning and behave well in lessons. Both staff and pupils say that behaviour has much improved since the introduction of a 'restorative justice' approach. This ensures that pupils are clear about the consequences of their actions and do their best to put things right.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school and know how to seek help. They are confident that staff will deal effectively with any concerns they raise. Pupils have a well-developed understanding of internet safety. They speak highly of the 'peer mediators' who are specially trained to assist other pupils in sorting out minor problems. The peer mediators themselves say how they have benefited from this and are learning a very important life skill.
- Parents and carers who completed the online questionnaire agree that their children are safe and well cared for at school. In discussions with inspectors, a very small minority expressed concerns that incidents of bullying were not dealt with well enough. Inspectors found, and school records show, that incidents of homophobic bullying and name-calling have reduced significantly as a result of appropriate and decisive action taken by staff. These incidents are now uncommon.
- The school works well with outside agencies to help pupils who need additional support. As a direct result of working with families, and encouraging attendance at the breakfast club, attendance has risen from average to above average. The breakfast and after-school clubs provide pupils with a wide range of activities and valuable opportunities to develop their social skills.

### **The leadership and management are good**

- A key strength of leadership at Priory Junior School is the calm, determined leadership of the headteacher. She has secured a focused, common purpose among the staff. As a result, there have been significant improvements in the school's performance since the previous inspection. Leaders at all levels, including the governing body, are very clear about what the school does well and what it needs to do next.
- The quality of teaching is improving because there is a very strong link between the way in which leaders rigorously track pupils' progress and check up on the quality of teaching. Teachers are provided with precise information about how they could improve their skills. The headteacher has fostered a team approach where staff are keen to learn from each other. Staff receive training which supports key areas for development and these are subsequently followed up by senior and subject leaders.
- The leaders pay good attention to promoting equality and appropriate measures are put in place

to tackle discrimination. Regular meetings are held with staff to ensure that those pupils who are falling behind get extra help.

- Opportunities for pupils to use their skills in reading, writing, mathematics and communication skills have been enhanced by the school's review of what and how it teaches pupils. The leaders make sure that pupils have plenty of opportunities to use their basic skills, such as reading and writing, while learning about other subjects. For example, Year 3 pupils were inspired to write a vivid account of what they had learned during their 'Greek Day' experience and Year 6 pupils are well motivated to edit and improve their biographies on the computers.
- The local authority now provides light touch support for this good school. It provides effective support, particularly in developing the skills of its leaders.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body knows the school's strengths and areas for development well and is fully committed to improving the school. While members do take account of the views of parents and carers informally, they do not formally seek their views on a regular basis. They work well in partnership with the headteacher and other leaders in the best interests of the children. Members of the governing body undertake appropriate training to support them in their roles and responsibilities. Strong links exist with subject leaders which enable the members to be knowledgeable about the school's work. Meeting notes show that they are tenacious in holding the school to account for pupils' achievement. The skills and expertise of governors are utilised well in the committee structure. They have managed the finances well, particularly with regard to the reduced funding which has come as a result of reduced pupil numbers. The governing body ensures that the additional funds, including the pupil premium, are spent wisely.

## What inspection judgements mean

| School  |                      |  |
|---------|----------------------|--|
| Grade   | Judgement            | Description  |
| Grade 1 | Outstanding          | An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.   |
| Grade 2 | Good                 | A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.   |
| Grade 3 | Requires improvement | A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.   |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate           | <p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> |

## School details

|                                |                |
|--------------------------------|----------------|
| <b>Unique reference number</b> | 110702         |
| <b>Local authority</b>         | Cambridgeshire |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 405299         |

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

|  |                            |
|--|----------------------------|
| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Junior                     |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Community                  |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 7–11                       |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed                      |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 243                        |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body         |
| <b>Chair</b>                               | Dawn Fitt                  |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Tracy Gould                |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>  | 12 January 2011            |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                    | 01480 226730               |
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