

Priory School

Independent school standard inspection report

DfE registration number	921/6041
Unique Reference Number (URN)	118225
Inspection number	397611
Inspection dates	4–5 December 2012
Reporting inspector	John Seal HMI

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.^{1, 2}

Information about the school

Priory School is an independent day school for boys and girls aged from four to 18 years. It opened in 1993. At the beginning of 2012, the school moved premises from its previous site in Shanklin on the Isle of Wight. It is now situated in a modified Victorian school located in Whippingham which until recently was a local authority maintained primary school. The school is registered for 140 pupils. Currently, there are 116 full-time pupils on roll, two of whom are in Reception. There are no pupils who have a statement of special educational needs and none who are looked after. The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. Two pupils speak English as an additional language.

The school states that its aims are to 'offer a first-class education at an affordable cost in a well-structured and clearly run environment in order to become the school of choice for parents and pupils on the Isle of Wight'.

This is the school's third full Ofsted inspection.

Evaluation of the school

Priory School provides a good quality of education and meets all the regulations. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The school meets its aims well. Pupils make good progress because of the good teaching supported by a good curriculum. Other strengths include pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and good behaviour. Assessment is satisfactory as is the school's provision for welfare, health and safety, including safeguarding arrangements.

Quality of education

The curriculum is good. All regulations are met, which is a significant improvement from the last inspection. It is not yet outstanding because although older pupils receive some individual support for careers advice and preparation for the world of work or next steps in education, there is no structured programme of activities or guidance. As a result, pupils are not always provided with an appropriate range of options, advice or activities from which to make informed choices.

¹ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents.

² www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/contents.

The very small numbers of children in Reception are well catered for. They cover all the required areas of learning. The subjects taught for pupils in Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 are broadly based on the National Curriculum. In addition, French and Italian are taught. In Key Stage 4, a range of GCSE courses is taught including English, mathematics, sciences and art. Other subjects at Key Stage 4 and GCSE include history, religious studies, geography, drama, photography and statistics. The small, but growing, numbers of pupils in the sixth form are able to study a range of A-level courses including English, mathematics, physics, biology, history, art and photography. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) is well taught in specifically timetabled lessons and in other subjects including civics, which is based on history, geography and current affairs.

The teaching of the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) is a strength of the school, especially reading and writing. Pupils are able to take part in a range of physical education (PE) activities and games. These include football, tag rugby and netball. A wide range of educational visits supplements the curriculum well including Carisbrooke Castle, a local Roman villa and a theatre in Southampton. The curriculum is enriched with opportunities for pupils to attend clubs both during and after school. These include a newspaper club, ballroom dancing and the Duke of Edinburgh Awards.

Teaching and assessment are good. They are not yet outstanding because the arrangements for measuring pupils' progress and using assessment information in the planning of lessons are underdeveloped.

The teaching team is committed and dedicated to helping and supporting pupils learn. The teachers plan and organise lessons well and, because of the class sizes, provide effective individual advice and support throughout the lessons. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and teachers use this to good effect when questioning pupils to check their understanding. Marking of pupils' work is generally regular and conscientious and there are some good examples where teachers have written comments to help pupils understand what they have to do to improve. This is especially the case in English for older pupils. However, this is not consistent across all subjects or ages. The key feature in the small number of less effective lessons includes teachers spending too much time explaining and instructing. Because of this over direction, pupils do not develop the skills required to help them become less reliant on teachers. As a result, pupils in these lessons make slower progress than they are capable of because they do not have enough time to learn.

Assessment is satisfactory. The youngest children are observed and their learning suitably recorded. Elsewhere in the school, teachers know their pupils well and share information with each other on an informal basis, but there are no formal or systematic procedures in place throughout the school. Consequently, the school is not able to track the progress made from the youngest to the oldest pupils regularly or use systematically collected information to inform lesson plans. This has a small, negative impact on the quality and relevance of a few lessons. Nevertheless, despite

this lack of formal data, pupils' progress is good overall. In the Reception class, children get off to a good start. They make good progress in covering the different areas of learning so they are well placed to start Key Stage 1. Pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 continue to progress well. Older pupils start their GCSE and A-level courses with confidence, with many of them achieving well. Most of the pupils who left the school at the end of Years 11 or 13 successfully progressed to further study, training or employment.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development is good overall. There are many strengths including the school's successful efforts to establish positive relationships with pupils and their families. Almost all the parents who responded to the on-line questionnaire were positive about the work of the school regarding how it looks after their children.

Pupils' attendance is regular and their behaviour is good. On some occasions it is exemplary. Pupils demonstrate a keenness to learn and listen well to each other and their teachers. Many examples were seen during the inspection of pupils demonstrating high levels of sustained concentration during lessons. At breaks and around the school, pupils are tolerant and helpful. The younger children and pupils told inspectors that many of the older pupils, especially the prefects who look after them, are thoughtful and caring. They also spoke positively about how they felt safe and cared for by the adults. Incidents of bullying are very infrequent. When they do occur, pupils are very confident that members of staff will tackle them swiftly and effectively.

Pupils are keen to contribute to the life of the school. Many of them enthusiastically engage with staff in decision making and ideas to improve the school. Pupils relish becoming prefects and house captains. Pupils contribute well to the local community through their involvement in the local harvest festival and successfully taking part in the Isle of Wight music competition. Pupils' awareness of the public institutions and services in England is developed well; an improvement from the last inspection. They learn about democracy and parliament in civics lessons and visits to the local county court for a mock trial. Pupils have a satisfactory understanding and awareness of people from different cultural backgrounds, particularly with regard to the different backgrounds of a small number of their peers. Pupils receive some information about this during religious studies and civics lessons, but there is no planned, cohesive approach to ensure all pupils gain a deeper understanding.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is satisfactory. It is not yet good because some of the policies and procedures required minor administrative adjustments during the inspection. For example, some elements of the policy for behaviour management required updating to take into account recent Department for Education guidance. Arrangements for child protection training and safeguarding

procedures are secure. All staff are suitably trained to fulfil their child protection responsibilities, this is an improvement since the school was last inspected. Risk assessments for a range of off-site activities and the school premises are secure. Policies and procedures for behaviour management, anti-bullying, health and safety, fire and first aid are up to date. The first-aid policy and staff training in first aid are current, an improvement from the last inspection. There is a sufficient number of first aiders on site. Pupils are well supervised at all times.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

Appropriate procedures for the vetting and appointment of staff and others are in place and arrangements meet all requirements. The school has a single central register of staff checks, which contains all of the required information. This is a significant improvement from the last inspection.

Premises and accommodation at the school

The school's premises offer appropriate accommodation for all pupils to be taught securely and safely, a significant improvement from the time of the last inspection. The internal and external learning environments for the children in Reception suitably meet their needs. The space available is appropriately maintained and decorated. There are specialist rooms for science laboratories, information and communication technology (ICT), art, a purpose built dark room for photography and a hall with PE equipment. The grounds of the school are very attractive and well maintained. They provide pupils with spaces for playing and learning outdoors. Arrangements and facilities for pupils who are ill are appropriate.

Provision of information

The school has made the improvements required from the last inspection. As a result, all of the required information is provided, or is made available, to parents, carers and others. An informative website provides up-to-date news and access to policies and other information. Parents are provided with termly reports on their children's academic progress.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The complaints procedure meets regulatory requirements.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The proprietor has ensured that the school meets The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, schedule 1 ('the Regulations').

What the school could do to improve further

While not required by regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development.

- Introduce a more formal system for assessment and the recording of pupils' achievement to improve the data available to teachers to inform their teaching.
- Implement a cohesive programme of careers advice and activities for the older pupils.
- Raise all pupils' awareness of the range of different people's cultures and beliefs in an ethnically diverse Britain through well-structured plans and activities for all year groups.

Inspection judgements

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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The quality of education

Overall quality of education		✓		
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils		✓		
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs		✓		
How well pupils make progress in their learning		✓		

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		✓		
The behaviour of pupils		✓		

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils			✓	
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School details

School status	Independent		
Type of school	Co-educational day school		
Date school opened	1993		
Age range of pupils	4–18 years		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 57	Girls: 59	Total: 116
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Annual fees (day pupils)	Junior school: £1600-1900 Senior school: £2100-2400 6th Form: £2700		
Address of school	Beatrice Avenue Whippingham Isle of Wight PO32 6LP		
Telephone number	01983 861 222		
Email address	mail@prioryschool.org.uk		
Headteacher	Mr E Matyjaszek		
Proprietor	Mr E Matyjaszek		

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.



6 December 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Priory School, Whippingham, PO32 6LP

Mrs MacDonald and I enjoyed meeting with you and talking to you about your work and life at school on our recent visit. We judged Priory School to be providing you with a good quality of education, meeting all government requirements. You told us that the school cares for you very well and you feel safe. There are some real strengths including:

- your good behaviour
- your regular attendance
- almost all of you make good progress
- you are able to learn about a wide range of different subjects
- you all get on with each other really well.

I talked to your Principal and staff about how they could improve the school even further and they are going to be working on:

- how to give all of you work at the right level
- how to make sure they regularly check that you are on course for the best grades you can get
- giving the older pupils better careers information and experiences
- helping you to have a better understanding of the different groups of people who live in Britain.

I hope that you all continue to enjoy your learning in the future.

Yours sincerely

John Seal
Her Majesty's Inspector