

# Priory Fields School

Astor Avenue, Dover, CT17 0FS

**Inspection dates** 20–21 June 2013

<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.

- Pupils make at least good progress in all year groups and excellent progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Attainment has improved over the last three years and pupils leave Year 6 with standards close to the national average.
- Teachers have high expectations of all pupils. They manage their classes well and through excellent planning ensure that additional adults have the same high expectations.
- Pupils' work is marked thoroughly in all classes and all subjects. This means that pupils know what they have done well. Many lessons include time for pupils to respond to marking to improve their work.
- The school provides good support for pupils who speak English as an additional language, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, and those who join part way through the year.
- The headteacher and governors are united in their ambition to ensure that all pupils succeed, learn about the opportunities in life and are ambitious for the future.
- Leaders are effective and their actions have improved teaching, including teachers' subject knowledge of mathematics and the teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make). All pupils enjoy their learning and know how to improve.
- Pupils feel safe and well cared for; they are caring towards each other. Older pupils 'buddy' with younger pupils and this reflects in a family feel to social times.
- Parents and carers praise the school for its efforts in helping their children to learn and settle in quickly. Parents and carers support the effective actions that the school has taken to improve behaviour and, because of this, exclusions have been greatly reduced.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Older pupils who join the school and are very new to writing in English do not make the same good progress in writing as they do in reading and mathematics.
- Occasionally, teachers' subject knowledge of some subjects is not as good as that in English and mathematics.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching in 20 lessons, five of which were joint observations with a senior leader.
- Inspectors reviewed a large sample of pupils' work with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, and looked at pupils' books in all lessons visited.
- Meetings were held with senior and middle leaders, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read, interviewed groups of pupils and members of the school council.
- A wide range of documentation was reviewed, including the school's own analysis of information on pupils' achievement, the school's view of the quality of its work and what it plans to do next, the governing body minutes and performance management documents. School policies, safeguarding procedures and records of behaviour, safety and attendance were also evaluated.
- Inspectors took account of the views of parents and carers as they were bringing their children to school, 30 responses on the online questionnaire (Parent View) and one telephone call.
- The 45 returns of the inspection questionnaire for staff were considered.

## Inspection team

Christine Fogg, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Bryan Meyer

Additional Inspector

John Viner

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is a larger-than-average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is average. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is higher than average.
- The proportions of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also above average.
- The stability of the school population is well below average, with high numbers joining and leaving the school throughout the year.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium (additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children looked after by the local authority and pupils with parents in the armed forces) is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school provides a breakfast club for pupils.

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

- Accelerate pupils' progress in writing by:
  - building on the recent effective strategies to improve writing and sharing teacher expertise across the whole school
- Improve teachers' subject knowledge across the different subjects in the curriculum, so that it is at least good as that in English and mathematics, by
  - delivering a programme of training to develop subject knowledge in these subjects.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Attainment on entry to the school is generally well below typical expectations and a significant number of children have no previous experience of school. By the time they leave Reception, the vast majority of pupils have reached expected levels. This represents excellent progress. Attainment at Key Stage 1 is below the national average but improving, with the greatest improvement in writing. All pupils make good progress.
- Attainment at Key Stage 2 has been below the national average but has been improving at the same rate, with good recent improvement in mathematics. Attainment in English and mathematics is broadly average and improving, despite an annual increase over recent years in the proportion of pupils eligible for pupil premium, those joining the school part way through their education, pupils at the early stages of learning English and pupils with special educational needs. The school targets additional support well to ensure that all pupils make good progress, with many reaching the levels expected for their age.
- The school has high expectations of all its pupils and careful checking of progress shows those pupils who speak English as an additional language make better progress in reading, writing and mathematics than their peers. Pupils who have joined the school late catch up well and make good progress.
- Pupils supported through the pupil premium make similar or better progress than their peers in reading, writing and mathematics. This means that the gap between groups of pupils is narrowing quickly, with pupils no more than one year behind their peers.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make similar progress to their peers and achieve well.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language show rapid progress in mathematics and reading. However, because they have not been speaking English for long, they lack the vocabulary and language to write to the level required by the time they take national tests. The school is now taking steps to tackle this.

### The quality of teaching is good

- The majority of teaching is at least good. Teachers often plan effectively to ensure that all pupils have work matched to their particular needs. Additional adults in the classroom are very well managed so that small groups or individual pupils get good support and make good progress.
- Teaching was judged to be satisfactory at the last inspection but strong leadership and a good programme of training mean that teaching has improved across the whole school with no inadequate teaching remaining. Attainment in mathematics has improved due to better teacher subject knowledge. However, in a few subjects, other than English and mathematics, teachers' subject knowledge is not yet good enough to plan outstanding learning.
- Phonics are taught well and used consistently. The pupils develop a love of reading and talk about their favourite authors with confidence and enthusiasm. They are ready to have a go at reading a new book and use their knowledge of phonics to tackle new words.
- There is a range of strategies used to improve the teaching of writing and this was evident by the quality and diversity of writing seen. Careful planning engages boys in writing about themes such as 'How to kill a dragon'. The range of writing opportunities is well planned to ensure that girls enjoy their writing as much as boys. Pupils' books show that they reinforce their writing skills across a range of subjects. However, a few older pupils who are new to learning English do not make good progress in writing.
- Teachers mark pupils' work thoroughly and their comments are very helpful to the pupils. Very often, pupils will respond to the marking with their 'polishing pen' and this extends their learning. This is very well done in English and mathematics with consistency across all other books indicating that this is a well-embedded whole-school practice.

- Pupils take care with their work and take pride in their presentation. Their books are neat and full of interesting activities. Teachers use resources, such as templates, well to support pupils' learning and encourage pupils to express themselves in their work.
- Planning in Reception takes place on a daily basis and diligent use of pupil premium funding means that the adult/pupil ratio is good, with small numbers of children being attached to one key person. This means that pupils settle in quickly and supports the development of their skills so that they play together well, make at least good progress in literacy and mathematics, and develop a love for writing as part of their own play.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language benefit from a scheme that teaches English so that they develop their knowledge of everyday vocabulary quickly. This gives them confidence to talk with their peers in lessons and to enjoy learning and playtimes.
- Class sizes are often small. This use of pupil premium means that all pupils benefit from small-group support from an adult who is often their teacher. Support is targeted well. Teachers were seen to make careful assessments of groups and make subsequent adjustments within a lesson. This meant that any misunderstandings were addressed and pupils were confident that the teacher would ensure that they understood before they moved onto the next stage.

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

- The pupils say that they feel safe in and enjoy coming to school. They understand the different types of bullying and say that it is rare in their school but they know what to do if it should arise. The pupils know how to keep safe when using the internet.
- The pupils play games and with toys at social times. Adults supervise team games and encourage pupils to have a go at a variety of activities. This means that playtime is productive, ensuring that pupils integrate and learn social and team skills.
- Attendance is improving and is close to the national average. The school works well with parents and carers to explain why time in school should not be missed, and this has improved attendance for a group of pupils.
- Behaviour has improved significantly since the last inspection. The seclusion room is rarely used now and the number of exclusions has dropped. Detentions are used with full parental support. The number of detentions used has dropped significantly since their introduction because they have been very effective in establishing what is expected as good behaviour.
- Behaviour is not outstanding because pupils do not always manage their own learning with independence. At times, some pupils rely on adults to tell them to do the right thing instead of making that decision themselves.
- Older pupils act as buddies to younger pupils and wear a 'buddy sign' on their sweatshirts. This system gives the young pupils a supportive link with older pupils who can help them at play-times and it fosters a family feel with shared play and dining experiences.
- Parents and carers praise the school highly. They describe the school as very approachable and value the care and attention that the school takes to ensure that each child's needs are considered. The majority of parents and carers feel that behaviour is well managed and that they know how well their child is doing.

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

- Leadership is good and has been effective in making improvements since the last inspection. The role of middle leaders has been developed well and this has quickened the pace of improvements. Middle leaders now report directly to governors and have a much clearer understanding of how all groups of pupils are progressing, as well as how to arrange timely support.
- Good performance management systems ensure that the quality of teaching is continually improving. Teachers know that they are accountable for the progress made by their pupils. The

school has recently revised its targets for teaching to reflect the leadership's raised expectations.

- The school knows how well it is doing because it has very good checking systems. It gathers information at regular intervals and uses this information to direct support for pupils, to adapt policies that are not effective and to target support for teachers and other adults.
- The school checks pupils' progress each term and looks at the information very thoroughly. It can explain how well any pupil is doing and uses the information about groups of pupils to ensure that the very good progress that some pupils are making is not masked by others with different starting points. This means that all pupils can be given the support that they need and resources are put where they are required.
- Good training through links with local partnership schools and by using in-house expertise has contributed to improvements in teaching since the last inspection. Support from the local authority has been helpful and has now reduced.
- Safeguarding arrangements are thorough and up to date. Leaders effectively promote equality of opportunity for all pupils and staff, and are proactive in tackling any form of discrimination.
- The curriculum has been developed to provide a good balance of subjects set in interesting contexts. It promotes the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness well. Displays around the school are rich in multicultural themes as well as detailed work about the locality. Leaders are aware that there is still work to be done to bring the level of teachers' subject knowledge in the wider curriculum up to that of English and mathematics.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors know the school very well and are outstanding in their support and challenge. They understand the importance of using pupil premium wisely and know how it makes a difference to the pupils that are entitled to it. They are knowledgeable about the way that the school has used all of its resources to ensure equal opportunities and to extend the experiences of all the pupils through school visits, class sizes as well as specific support. The governors compare the school's performance with similar schools and can explain what the school's priorities are and why. The governors understand the school information well. They talked with confidence about a range of information and the implications for the school; they know how well their school is doing in comparison with others nationally. The governors have used training well and carry out self-reviews to plan further training needs. They meet regularly with middle leaders to discuss pupils' progress and the improvements to teaching. They have supported the headteacher in her drive to improve teaching and can explain how performance management is used to manage and evaluate this ongoing process.

## 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>	118391
<b>Local authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	405765

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	348
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Bryan Cope
<b>Headteacher</b>	Anne Siggins
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	October 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01304 211543
<b>Fax number</b>	01304 211545
<b>Email address</b>	ht@prioryfields.kent.sch.uk



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