

Priory Junior School

Priory Road, Gedling, Nottingham, NG4 3LE

Inspection dates

9–10 October 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Teaching is not consistently good across the school and pupils do not make as much progress as they should by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils' achievement has declined since the last inspection. Not enough pupils are reaching the higher levels of attainment in both English and mathematics.
- Not enough pupils make rapid progress in all year groups.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunity to practise English and mathematics skills in other areas of the curriculum.
- In lessons, pupils are not always clear how to improve their work.
- Teachers' questions do not allow pupils to think and develop their own ideas sufficiently.
- The amount of work in pupils' books varies too much and not all teachers expect as much as others when asking pupils to write at length.
- Senior leaders have not set high enough expectations of the progress pupils should make. They do not hold teachers to account rigorously enough for the outcomes of their pupils.
- School development planning has not focussed sufficiently on measuring the impact of the actions the school takes to improve outcomes for all its pupils.
- Governors and leaders at all levels have an overly generous view how well the school is doing.

The school has the following strengths

- Attendance is consistently good and pupils enjoy going to school and behave well.
- In those lessons where there is consistently good teaching, pupils make good progress.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is comprehensive.
- The school takes good care of its pupils, keeps them safe and nurtures them effectively.
- Pupils enjoy school and attendance is above average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 14 lessons, some of them jointly observed with the acting headteacher.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work in English and mathematics and topic books in all year groups.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and checked their progress in learning the sounds that letters make (phonics) in Years 5 and 4.
- Inspectors talked with two groups of pupils about their work to gauge their views on their progress in school. They also talked with pupils about how safe they feel in school and in the wider world.
- An inspector attended an assembly and another checked how the pupils behaved at playtime and how they managed their behaviour around school.
- Meetings took place with members of the governing body and school leaders.
- The lead inspector had a discussion with the local authority representative by telephone.
- An inspector talked to parents and carers about the school and the team took account of their responses to the on-line questionnaire Parent View.
- An inspector scrutinised the arrangements and records kept to safeguard pupils as well as the school's child protection procedures.
- The school's development plan and self-evaluation were scrutinised, and inspectors reviewed the records that leaders and teachers use to assess pupils' learning and progress.
- The school's last full inspection was in June 2010.

Inspection team

Jan Connor, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Michael Appleby

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is a smaller than most primary schools.
- The majority of pupils come from White British backgrounds. A small minority of pupils come from Caribbean and White and Black Caribbean backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is lower than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives pupil premium funding is broadly in line with the national average. This is additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or who are looked-after children.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with statements of special educational needs is broadly average. The main areas of additional need include pupils with moderate learning difficulties, and behaviour, emotional and social difficulties.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The deputy headteacher is operating as the acting headteacher in the absence, through illness, of the full-time head.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it becomes consistently good by:
 - ensuring pupils understand what they are expected to learn so they know if they have been successful
 - providing greater challenge for all groups of pupils in order to accelerate the progress they make in each lesson
 - ensuring that all teachers have the same high expectations of what pupils can achieve, including the most able, and produce written work of appropriate length for their age
 - using the expertise already in school to improve teaching, so that it is of a consistently high standard in every year group.
- Raise achievement by:
 - setting targets for pupils' attainment and progress that are sufficiently challenging and based on the national expectations for good achievement
 - identifying more opportunities for pupils to practise their English and mathematics skills in other subjects taught in school.
- Improve leadership and management at all levels by:
 - ensuring the plans for school improvement clearly identify how actions will improve the outcomes for pupils
 - building more rigour into the monitoring of the school's performance, particularly in the performance management of teachers, so that leaders and managers are able to hold teachers to account more precisely for the outcomes of pupils in their classes
 - ensuring the governing body provides rigorous challenge to senior leaders based on accurate

information about the quality of teaching and the progress of pupils in school.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils **requires improvement**

- Achievement requires improvement because not enough pupils make consistently good and sustained progress across the school. Last year, several groups of pupils in Year 6 made progress that was significantly lower than the national average. This includes pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding. Provisional data for 2013 shows that progress has improved for these groups of pupils but the levels they attained in English and mathematics dipped slightly.
- There is a mixed picture of achievement across the school. Not enough pupils, particularly the most able, make better than expected progress. Where pupils do make good progress this is due to teaching that is engaging and focused correctly on the learning needs of all pupils. Inconsistencies in provision in English and mathematics have meant that not all pupils reach the levels they could by the time they leave Year 6.
- Since the last inspection, there has been a gradual fall in the attainment of pupils because progress has not been consistently good across all year groups. Not enough of the most able pupils are achieving the higher levels.
- Progress in writing varies across the school. It is good where pupils have regular opportunities to write at length and for different purposes. However, this is not always the case and as a result, some pupils make better progress than others do. The work rate in some classes far exceeds the work rate in others and therefore inconsistencies have developed. However, senior leaders have worked hard to improve writing and there is evidence that this is working.
- An extensive programme of well-targeted support has correctly identified where disabled pupils and those with special educational needs need support, and prompt action has been to address the gaps in pupils' learning. As a result, these pupils now make similar progress to other pupils in school.
- The school has used its pupil premium funding to provide additional support for pupils who are eligible. Currently this group of pupils is making similar rates of progress to other pupils in school. They are approximately one term behind their classmates in attainment in both English and mathematics but gaps, particularly in mathematics are narrowing.
- Progress in reading and mathematics is stronger than in writing. Pupils read confidently in class and enjoy reading a variety of different books. They are developing their speaking skills and this has had an impact on their progress in writing. Pupils enjoy their mathematics lessons because this is where they have more opportunities to think for themselves, explore, and investigate new learning.

The quality of teaching **requires improvement**

- Teaching requires improvement because not enough of it is good.
- Where teaching requires improvement the work given to pupils is not challenging enough or well matched to their needs. Teachers do not give pupils enough time to explain their own thinking and often spend more time talking themselves rather than listening to pupils. As a result, teachers do not consistently correct pupils' misconceptions and accelerate learning. Sometimes, pupils wait too long to begin their work and the pace of learning slows.

- Not all marking is detailed enough to help pupils to improve their learning. Where marking is most effective, teachers link their comments to the work the pupils are doing and to the pupils' targets for improvement. As a result, pupils said they felt they knew how well they were doing and what they needed to do to improve their work further.
- In the best lessons, teachers ensure all pupils, including those who are disabled or who have special educational needs, know what they are intending to learn and are given appropriate guidance and help so that teachers know whether they have been successful in what they were trying to convey. This is not the case in all classes.
- The most effective teachers use questions that allow pupils to think for themselves and make mistakes and learn from them. Teachers listen carefully to answers pupils give and skilfully use these to correct misconceptions so that learning continues at a rapid pace. Inspectors saw some of the best teaching in mathematics. For example, in Year 6, pupils working on calculating square numbers were challenged by the teacher to work out their answers by using methods learnt from a previous day. As a result, pupils were able to work out the problems confidently, the atmosphere was dynamic, and pupils made good progress.
- Relationships in the classroom are generally good; teachers and teaching assistants provide calm, working atmospheres that encourage pupils to focus on their tasks. In the better classrooms, displays provide pupils with help to develop their skills in English and mathematics across the curriculum. These classrooms enable pupils to develop independence and take responsibility for their own learning.
- Teaching assistants provide a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. Good support and well-timed questions give pupils the encouragement they need to try new learning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' attitudes to learning in lessons are consistently positive even when the teaching isn't demanding enough. Pupils enjoy coming to school and this is clear from the information on attendance, which is above the national average.
- Pupils are polite and courteous. They regularly open doors for each other, and show care in the way they play together at playtimes. Incidents of poor behaviour are rare, and school leaders carefully track these and deal with them effectively. As a result, behaviour has improved and exclusions have reduced considerably.
- Arrangements for the safety of pupils are clear and effective, including safe use of the internet, and the security of the school site. Pupils say they feel safe and that the adults in school take good care of them. They also say they know who to talk to if they have a problem and feel confident that adults will resolve any issues they have. Parents agreed with this in their responses to the on-line questionnaire, Parent View.
- Pupils are aware of the many different forms of bullying, including cyber bullying, homophobic bullying, and racist name-calling. Pupils report that there are times when inappropriate name-calling happens, but they say adults deal with these immediately and help them understand why these are wrong in the teaching they receive in lessons.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because senior leaders have not been sufficiently rigorous in holding teachers to account for the progress their pupils make. A system for the appraisal of teachers' performance is in place. However, targets are too imprecise and are therefore not robust enough in ensuring good outcomes for all pupils.
- The school has an improvement plan that identifies appropriate areas for development. However, links between actions and measurable outcomes for pupils are not sufficiently robust or measurable to be an effective tool for driving through improvements quickly.
- School self-evaluation is not as accurate as it needs to be. School leaders have an over generous view of how well the school is doing. Their judgements are not based securely enough on progress and attainment data in mathematics and English.
- School leaders regularly check how well pupils are doing in their lessons. Their evaluations about teaching and learning are reported back to teachers in detail. However, their observations do not focus enough on the impact teachers have on the progress pupils make in lessons. As a result, they have not been able to sharpen day-to-day teaching sufficiently and improve learning.
- The headteacher recognises the need to build capacity in leadership. She is rightly reviewing the staffing structure at the most senior level in order to increase its effectiveness in tackling teaching and learning that is less than good. Subject leadership is being well supported through the development of subject partnerships with other local schools.
- Partnerships with local schools are strong. Senior and middle leaders work effectively with other schools to organise staff development and training. This has been effective in bringing about improvements in reading, writing, and mathematics.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral and social development well. Teaching programmes are carefully designed to hold pupils' interest and ensure they are keen to learn. In order to make the best use of the extra sport funding (provided by the government to all primary schools) the senior leaders have developed a plan, which they anticipate will have a positive impact on pupils' wellbeing. This includes working together with the family of schools in the local area.
- The school ensures that all statutory requirements for safeguarding are met and arrangements for children's welfare and their protection are secure.
- The local authority is beginning to provide more focused support to help the school. They are brokering a link with a Local Leader in Education to obtain the support the school needs for it to improve, although this link has yet to be established. The local authority is giving the school further support through training and local authority advisor support time.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors receive regular reports about the impact of support for pupils eligible for pupil premium funding and they track the extra funding carefully.
 - Governors have systems for checking how well the school is doing. However, their work is not as effective as it needs to be. This is because the information they receive is not clear enough for them to know if pupils are making good progress or not.
 - Governors engage in direct monitoring of the school. They are actively involved in the development of policies and use the skills they have to support the school to improve.

Governors are linked to English, mathematics and information technology. This allows them to be closely involved with developments in these subjects. However, governors are not sufficiently vigilant about the outcomes for pupils so that possible dips in performance are identified early, addressed quickly and eradicated.

- Governors have arrangements in place for reviewing the performance of the headteacher and staff. However, they have not been sufficiently challenging about whether all teachers have met the Teachers' Standards for performance when making decisions about pay progression.

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

Unique reference number	122531
Local authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	427414

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	183
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Anne Baldry
Headteacher	Susan Curson
Date of previous school inspection	June 2010
Telephone number	0115 9526100
Email address	office7@priory-jun.notts.sch.uk

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