

Priory Infant School

Cannon Road, Ramsgate, Kent, CT11 9XT

Inspection dates 6–7 February 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
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 achieve well overall and especially well in reading and mathematics. Their attainment in these areas has been above the national average for the last four years.
- Children have a good start to school in Reception. They are interested in their learning and are prepared well for Year 1.
- Pupils make good progress because of teaching which is good and engages pupils well. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning in lessons and in small groups.
- Pupils who are disabled and those with special educational needs or who speak English as an additional language have good levels of support so that they achieve well.
- Pupils are safe and secure and their behaviour and attitudes to learning are good. They get on well together so that any form of bullying is rare.
- Adults look after pupils very well so that pupils feel safe and their parents agree.
- Pupils' progress is monitored closely so that anyone at risk of falling behind is picked up early and given good support to catch up.
- The curriculum is carefully planned to give pupils exciting learning experiences which effectively develop their curiosity.
- The school is well led by the headteacher and senior staff to bring about improvement. The governing body knows the school well and holds staff to account for pupils' ongoing achievement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils' achievement in writing is not as good as in reading and mathematics. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to reflect upon and improve their own writing.
- Pupils' achievement over time is not outstanding because there is not enough teaching of the highest quality. Teachers have not fully identified and shared the most effective practices, particularly in promoting pupils' writing.
- Occasionally, teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve in lessons.
- Although teachers mark pupils' work conscientiously, pupils do not routinely build on the help and advice given.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 11 lessons and small group sessions. Two of these were observed jointly with senior leaders. An inspector and the headteacher also carried out a series of shorter visits to lessons.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and scrutinised samples of pupils' work.
- Discussions were held with senior leaders, staff, pupils and representatives of the governing body. A telephone conversation took place with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of 31 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, along with the outcomes of conversations with parents during the inspection and the 13 questionnaire responses from staff.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation including information on the progress of groups of pupils, nationally published assessment data, the school's self-evaluation, improvement plans, safeguarding information, and records relating to teachers' performance management.

Inspection team

Helen Hutchings, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Michael Sutherland-Harper

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for support by the pupil premium is above average. This is additional government funding for pupils entitled to free school meals, those looked after by the local authority or those from service families.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is high as is the proportion supported at school action.
- A few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The school runs a breakfast club.
- The school works in collaboration with other primary schools locally, mainly to support staff development.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching from good to outstanding by making sure that teachers:
 - have consistently high expectations of what pupils can achieve in all lessons
 - review and share the most effective practice, particularly in writing.
- Raise achievement in writing by giving pupils more opportunities to:
 - reflect on and edit their own writing
 - strengthen their learning more quickly by carrying out activities linked to the advice given in teachers' marking.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils achieve well across the school. By the end of Year 2, pupils' overall attainment has been above that found nationally for the last four years. Although usually above average, there is some variation in pupils' attainment in writing from year to year. Pupils' attainment in reading and mathematics is a strength of the school.
- Children join Reception with levels of skills and understanding, which, when taken together, are below those expected for their age, particularly in speech and communication. They make good progress in acquiring new skills so that they are prepared well for Year 1. Children are enthusiastic and confident because of the quality of care and interesting range of activities planned for them. They learn the sounds that letters make and most write simple sentences, although standards in writing are not as well developed as in reading and mathematics.
- The national checks on phonics (letters and their sounds) in Year 1 show that fewer pupils reach the expected standard than nationally. The school has used this information to change its approach to teaching phonics so that it is more interesting for pupils. The school's tracking information shows that this change is effectively improving pupils' skills. Nevertheless, pupils' reading skills have been consistently above average by the end of Year 2.
- Pupils are encouraged to write each day, including informally in their personal 'learning books', and pupils write confidently. However, fewer pupils reach the higher levels in writing than in reading and mathematics. Pupils' work is checked carefully for spelling and grammar, but pupils have not developed their skills of self-reflection well because they do not have enough opportunities to review their own writing and to make improvements for themselves.
- Pupils' mathematics skills are developed effectively by many hands-on activities which ensure that pupils consolidate their number work in practical situations. For example, during the inspection pupils measured room dimensions before creating floor plans.
- The school's commitment to promoting equality of opportunity is seen in the effective way pupils' progress is monitored and the information used to take timely action to address any difficulties pupils may be experiencing. As a result, pupils with different starting points and needs make good progress. Pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs and the few pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress because of the range of effective approaches in lessons and small group sessions or through individual support.
- The attainment gap between pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium and other pupils closes as they move through the school, showing the effectiveness of the use of the additional funding. In 2013, there was a gap of around eight months in reading, writing and mathematics. The gap for pupils currently in Year 2 is narrower because of the faster progress these pupils made in relation to their peers in Year 1. In addition to small group support, the school has ensured that each individual's needs are identified and addressed and that eligible pupils are fully involved in enrichment activities.

The quality of teaching is good

- Most parents agree that their children are taught well. Teaching over time and across the school is good. However, there is not enough outstanding teaching for more pupils to make better than expected progress.
- Teachers plan well together and share ideas to make learning interesting for pupils. Writing standards improved well last year over previous years, but the school has yet to take the same forensic approach to improving the teaching of writing that it employed to strengthen the impact of phonics teaching.
- The positive relationships between pupils and adults help pupils to learn well. Pupils enjoy school and their learning because of the care taken to make lessons interesting, often consolidating their basic skills in topic work. Pupils know that they are listened to. For example, in a whole-class feedback the teacher emphasised that 'opinions are important' and ensured that all ideas

were listened to and considered carefully.

- Classrooms are bright with vibrant displays of pupils' work. Records of the stimulating activities they have undertaken and prompts for learning help pupils to remember their achievements and to find things out for themselves. The outdoor area for Reception children is well equipped and is used very well for a wide range of activities for them to learn outdoors in all weathers.
- Where teaching is best, pupils make rapid gains in their knowledge and understanding because teachers have high expectations that every moment counts. The tasks they set for pupils are closely tailored to their earlier understanding and keep pupils engaged throughout the whole lesson. Teachers usually adjust activities effectively through the lesson when it is clear that pupils have mastered the key learning points, adding fresh additional challenges which engage and motivate pupils.
- Teaching is not outstanding because, occasionally, teachers do not have high enough expectations of how much pupils can achieve in the time given or allow activities to continue when pupils are capable of moving on to harder work. In these lessons, pupils relax their concentration levels so that the pace of learning slows down.
- Teaching assistants have been trained well so that they are confident and have a good understanding of their roles. They help to ensure that pupils are listened to reading regularly, so that difficulties are picked up and addressed quickly. They use their thorough understanding of phonics to run small groups so that pupils are taught at a level matched well to their needs. Some teaching assistants have been trained to run specific programmes to support pupils who have social, emotional or learning difficulties. The school checks the impact of these programmes carefully so that changes are made if they are not proving effective.
- Pupils' books show the encouragement given for pupils in their work. Marking is regular and includes both acknowledgement of what pupils have achieved as well as guidance on their next steps. However, pupils are rarely required to respond to these points for improvement or to correct misconceptions at the earliest possible stage. Teachers track pupils' achievements on sheets in each book which helps pupils to understand how well they are doing.
- The school uses homework imaginatively, often to support topic work. For example, as part of a current local study of Ramsgate, Year 2 pupils widened their knowledge about the town by looking at their routes to school. They then used this in a writing task on 'the secret city hidden under Ramsgate'. Parents are given good quality information on how to promote pupils' reading and numeracy skills at their children's different stages through the school.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils like school because they 'have lots of fun things to do' and 'get to learn new things we don't know'. They show their good attitudes by listening well in lessons and working hard. It is not outstanding because occasionally pupils lose their concentration and chatter to one another when they find their tasks less interesting or are not clear about what is expected of them.
- Pupils are aware of the school's code of conduct and of what they should and should not do. These attitudes are reinforced through the consistently positive interactions they have with adults. In addition, displays around the school and assemblies are used effectively to promote all aspects of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils feel safe in school and their parents agreed unanimously in their response to the inspection questionnaire. Pupils know that there is always an adult on hand who will listen to and resolve their concerns quickly. Pupils say that behaviour is good and that there is little, if any, bullying. They are aware of the different forms of bullying such as name-calling. Their awareness of internet bullying is promoted regularly and the pupils spoken with did not know of it happening to them or their friends.
- Pupils of all backgrounds and cultures get on well together. There have not been any racial incidents since the last inspection. Older pupils help to look after younger ones, and play helpers mean that no-one is left to play alone at breaks and lunchtimes. Pupils thoroughly enjoy the rich

range of playground activities and equipment, and treat it with respect. The site is litter free.

- The school keeps careful records of incidents, rewards and sanctions which it uses to analyse and address behaviour over time. Close work with parents and children, often involving the family liaison officer, means that any potential difficulties are addressed at an early stage. Only in exceptional circumstances has it been necessary to exclude any pupils.
- A focus on improving attendance has been particularly successful, with a steady increase over the last three years. Attendance is now above average and the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent has fallen sharply.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, deputy headteacher and governing body work closely together and have established a very clear vision for the school's development. Self-evaluation is realistic and used to set priorities. Staff are clear about their roles in driving forward school improvement.
- Raising pupils' achievement by improving teaching lies at the heart of the school's improvement strategy. Leaders and middle managers regularly check the quality of teaching and give detailed feedback on how teaching can be improved. A robust programme of professional development is in place within the school and is complemented through joint activities organised as part of collaborative arrangements with other schools locally.
- The curriculum is planned very effectively using a series of topics which link learning across subjects and support pupils' reading, writing and mathematics skills. The arts are given a high priority, seen in rich examples of pupils' artwork around the school, such as those showing their knowledge of the work of famous artists. In assembly, Year 2 pupils' singing was strong and confident when they sang excerpts from the musical 'Oliver' for other pupils.
- The additional funding to support physical education and sport is being used effectively and is helping pupils to develop healthier lifestyles and improve their well-being. Specialist teachers are supporting the school's teachers to improve their skills while strengthening the impact of physical education lessons. Specialist coaching is increasing pupils' participation in extra-curricular sport. Pupils from the school regularly participate in sports competitions with other schools locally.
- As part of its light-touch support for the school, the local authority has given effective support for the school's self-evaluation, including a review of teaching, and governor training on holding the school to account. Funding for collaboration activities has included moderating the accuracy of the school's assessments.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is fully involved in checking the effectiveness of the school's work. Governors are highly perceptive and well informed. Their strong, strategic lead is based on an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and where improvements can be made. They understand how well the school is doing in relation to other schools nationally because they regularly review the impact of school improvement actions on pupils' achievements. They have a good understanding of the quality of teaching from direct observation and from a recent local authority review, and ensure that salary progression is linked to pupils' achievement. The minutes of governing body meetings show that governors support and challenge the school in equal measure. Governors monitor the school's finances closely and understand how effectively additional funding, including sports and pupil premium funding, are being used. They ensure that safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements.

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	118416
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	441038

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	181
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Robert Crook
Headteacher	Tracey Jones
Date of previous school inspection	14–15 September 2010
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