

The Priory Primary School

Dorsett Road, Friar Park, Wednesbury, WS10 0JG

Inspection dates 25–26 March 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	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

- Most pupils make expected rather than good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. As a result, standards are below average when pupils leave the school.
- Teachers do not always give pupils, especially the most-able pupils, work that stretches them and helps them to achieve higher levels.
- Long-term planning in mathematics does not provide a clear enough framework for good achievement.
- Some older pupils do not have a good range of reading skills by the time they leave school.
- Leadership and management require improvement because the governing body have not kept a close enough eye on standards. It has not effectively held school leaders to account for their work.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher, with effective support from other senior leaders, is rapidly improving the quality of teaching. This is having a positive impact on pupils' learning.
- Behaviour and safety are good in class and around the school. Pupils have a positive attitude to their learning and feel safe in school.
- The curriculum provides pupils with a range of opportunities to successfully develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness.
- Pupils' attendance has improved to above-average levels.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 12 lessons, including several jointly observed with school leaders. Inspectors also listened to pupils read and reviewed their written work.
- Discussions were held with different groups including pupils, members of the governing body, the headteacher and other senior leaders, teachers and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documents and records relating to pupils’ current progress, procedures for checking the quality of teaching, safeguarding, and behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors also scrutinised self–evaluation and planning documents, minutes of meetings of the governing body, safeguarding records and documents relating to the management of teachers’ performance.
- Inspectors took into account the views of 12 parents and carers who responded to the online Parent View survey. Inspectors considered the views expressed in 22 questionnaires returned by staff.
- Inspectors reviewed the school’s website.

Inspection team

Ian Jones, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Laura Henshaw

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school.
- The school has an average proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through pupil premium funding is well above average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- Most pupils are from White British families.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average.
- The school does not meet the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- A number of staff are new to the school since the time of the previous inspection, including the headteacher, deputy headteacher and four teachers new to the profession.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it is consistently good or better by:
 - ensuring teachers have high enough expectations of what pupils, especially the most-able pupils, can achieve and give them work which challenges and stretches them, helping them to achieve higher levels
 - sharing the principles of existing good practice so that they are used more regularly throughout the school.
- Improve achievement for all pupils so that it is consistently good or better by:
 - modifying long-term planning in mathematics, ensuring that pupils acquire skills and understanding at the appropriate time
 - strengthening pupils' reading comprehension skills in Key Stage 2.
- Ensure the governing body has an accurate understanding of standards and holds school leaders to account effectively for their work.

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

- Pupils are not making good enough progress from their starting points. The progress of the most-able pupils, in particular, is not always sufficiently rapid. Teachers do not always have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve. They sometimes do not give them work that challenges and stretches them enough, to help them achieve higher levels.
- Children start the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills which are well below those typical for their age, particularly in communication and personal and social skills. In recent years attainment at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 has been below average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- In the past, progress has not been good enough to help pupils reach expected levels by the time they leave Year 6. There has been a significant improvement, and assessment data for the past year show that pupils' progress has improved markedly in reading, writing and mathematics and in all year groups. Progress is still not fast enough to fully make up for past underachievement, and the school knows there is still much to do. Additional teaching that is tailored to help pupils make up lost ground is helping to accelerate the progress of pupils in Year 6.
- Progress in writing is improving. This is because there is a more structured approach to teaching writing. Pupils are now more aware of what they need to do in order to write in different styles, and are developing greater understanding of aspects of grammar and punctuation. However, progress in spelling lags behind other aspects of literacy because pupils are not given enough support to spell accurately.
- Pupils' work shows that they are now making better progress in basic mathematical skills. However, long-term planning is not structured well enough to consolidate their learning and strengthen their mathematical understanding.
- Younger pupils are making accelerated progress in reading. This is as a result of a carefully-structured and well-resourced daily teaching programme which has raised teachers' expectations and is supported by effective training. Progress in reading for older pupils is sometimes hampered because they do not make enough use of skills such as inference, deduction and comprehension.
- Published data show that disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs did not previously make good progress. Pupils who need extra help are now being identified at an early stage and are well supported in small groups and through special programmes. They usually make good progress in lessons and there are signs that their progress overall is improving.
- In 2013, pupils in Year 6 supported through the pupil premium were approximately one term behind other pupils in reading, writing and mathematics. However, the progress of these pupils has improved since September 2013. The school is making good use of the pupil premium funding to target the needs of individual pupils and the gaps between their achievement and that of others are closing.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Although teaching has improved over the last year, it has not been consistently good enough to ensure that pupils make good progress. Some elements of teaching still require improvement. In

the past teaching did not take sufficient account of pupils' prior attainment, so that work was sometimes too easy or too difficult. Pupils made less progress as a result.

- Lesson planning is improving and teaching more often builds on pupils' previous learning. However pupils are not always given work which challenges their thinking and more-able pupils are not always challenged to do well enough. Long-term planning in mathematics lacks clarity and school leaders recognise that this has contributed to weaker progress.
- There have been significant changes in staffing since the previous inspection, with four new teachers starting this year. They have made a promising start, and are now beginning to close the previous gaps in pupils' learning. However, the school has not yet developed a way of sharing the good practice seen in some classrooms to improve the teaching skills of other teachers.
- The school environment is stimulating and supports learning. Classrooms are orderly and well organised, and attractive and imaginative displays inspire pupils of all abilities to learn. Good relationships and the use of praise and encouragement are strong features in lessons and most pupils are keen to do well. They say that things have improved, and that teachers now make their lessons interesting and use a range of resources to help them learn.
- Teaching assistants are well trained to provide intensive literacy and numeracy teaching to pupils who need additional support, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage enjoy regular opportunities for writing and problem solving outdoors.
- The school makes good use of specialist teaching and coaching. High levels of physical activity are encouraged through a range of activities during the day and after school. This makes a good contribution to pupils' health and well-being.
- Marking of pupils' work has been developing this year and is now of good quality. In English for example, feedback is effective because it carefully explains how pupils could improve their work and pupils show their understanding of the teacher's comments by giving examples of this new learning in response.

The behaviour and safety of pupils is good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are happy to learn and attendance is above average. Throughout the school relationships between staff and pupils are highly positive and behaviour is exceptionally well managed.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning support their improving progress. They apply themselves well to tasks, concentrate well and are keen to succeed. They work independently, without the direct guidance of an adult, in most lessons. Just occasionally, pupils lose focus and do not keep up a good pace of learning when tasks are not matched to their abilities.
- Pupils enjoy working alongside each other and discussing their work in pairs. They are very supportive of each other and quick to help each other out.
- Behaviour in assemblies, on the playground and as they move around the school is good. Pupils

enjoy the additional responsibilities they are given, such as being members of the school council.

- Pupils report that behaviour is good and that incidents of bullying are rare. They know about different types of bullying and know what to do to seek help should it occur.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe in many different situations, including when using modern technology. They feel safe in school and very well cared for by teachers and other staff.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Parents are happy that their children are kept safe and that behaviour in the school is well-managed. Parents recognise the many ways that the school has improved following the arrival of the headteacher and deputy headteacher.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership has been strengthened by the actions and resolve of the school's new leadership team. Despite this however, senior leaders have not managed to improve teaching to the point where it is good and this has resulted in underachievement for some pupils.
- The new headteacher is providing strong leadership. He knows exactly what needs to be done to move the school forward and demonstrates the drive and determination to succeed. He is well supported by senior leaders. They have done a lot to move the school forward in a short period of time, although teaching, especially in mathematics and reading in Key Stage 2 has not improved as fast as in other subjects.
- Senior leaders have taken decisive action to improve the quality of teaching. They carry out regular checks through watching lessons and scrutinising pupils' work. They give teachers clear guidance and support them where necessary, to ensure that their teaching improves. Performance management targets are clearly based on how well pupils in their classes are doing. Whilst this process is effective, it is too recent to have had a significant impact upon teaching.
- The headteacher has introduced a more rigorous process of self-evaluation and improvement planning which is now providing a clear picture of where further improvement is needed. School staff say they are now much clearer about what they need to do to improve. Work undertaken is beginning to have a positive impact on achievement, in particular in writing and early reading.
- Senior leaders recognise that middle leadership is not as strong as it could be and have made a good start to developing their impact. For example the four new teachers each have an experienced teacher to mentor them and provide useful support.
- The curriculum appropriately promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and is enriched by a range of extra clubs such as cookery, art, gardening, multi-sports and bug club. Pupils enjoy the regular visits designed to broaden their experiences of the world around them.
- The headteacher and governors value the support provided by the local authority, such as recent training on interpreting pupil data. The school's adviser has a clear understanding of its strengths and where further improvement is needed. Prior to the arrival of the current headteacher, however, the local authority was not working closely enough with the school to challenge past weaknesses rigorously.
- All staff who completed the staff questionnaire were extremely supportive of the new leadership.

They realise there is work to be done and are enthusiastic about improving their skills in order to do the best for the pupils.

- The new primary school sport funding is used appropriately to increase teachers' coaching skills and to provide more opportunities for pupils to partake in physical activities within and beyond the school day.
- Parents are positive about the school. They say that staff are approachable and know individual pupils well. They feel that the school is improving and are very supportive of the leadership team.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body is proud of the school and committed to its success. However until recently it has been too reliant on senior leaders. Governors have not challenged the school's performance or held leaders to account with enough rigour. As a result the previous decline in achievement was not clearly understood. A number of new governors have joined the school and many governors have attended training, including in understanding performance data. The governing body now has a better understanding of pupils' attainment and progress and what needs to be done to improve the school's performance. Governors now evaluate the quality of teaching and use this information well when reviewing pay increases for staff. Governors have a clear understanding of the school's finances, including sport funding, and are aware of the impact of pupil premium spending. The governing body ensure that safeguarding arrangements meet all 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	131212
Local authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	431128

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	236
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andrew Farrington
Headteacher	Phill Butcher
Date of previous school inspection	28 June 2012
Telephone number	0121 556 1383
Fax number	0121 556 0520
Email address	school.office@priory.sandwell.sch.uk

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