

The Priory Parish CofE Primary School

Aberdeen Street, Birkenhead, Merseyside, CH41 4HS

Inspection dates 7–8 May 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.

- From very low starting points, pupils achieve well so that by the time they leave they are close to reaching national average standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teaching is good overall and some teaching is outstanding.
- Behaviour and safety are good. Pupils have a pride in their school and everyone gets on well together. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Pupils feel safe in school and are cared for exceptionally well.
- The headteacher provides good leadership. All leaders, including governors, are committed to continuous improvement in teaching and learning and they share a strong desire to provide the best for every pupil.
- The school provides a good range of activities in sport. There are good links with the church and the local high school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- While pupils make good progress and are improving in reading and mathematics, their attainment and rates of progress are not as good in writing because they do not have enough opportunities to write often enough.
- There is not enough outstanding teaching. During some activities, the most-able pupils are not challenged enough and pupils' work is not always well presented.
- Marking does not always give pupils enough guidance about how their work might be improved or the opportunity to follow up on the advice.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in all classes and saw 18 lessons, one of which was a joint observation with the headteacher. In addition, the inspectors listened to pupils read and observed teaching assistants working with pupils.
- Discussions were held with pupils in lessons and their work was discussed with them.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders and middle leaders, members of the governing body, teaching and support staff, pupils and a member of the local authority.
- Pupils' work was scrutinised in writing, mathematics and a range of other subjects.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and checked reading progress records.
- A wide range of documentation was reviewed, including national assessment data, the school's information about pupils' progress, monitoring records of the quality of teaching and the progress of pupils, and the school improvement plan. In addition, the minutes of the governing body meetings, safeguarding documentation and external reports from the local authority were reviewed.
- Seventeen responses from parents to the on-line questionnaire were taken into account (Parent View). Members of the inspection team also spoke to parents while they were bringing their children to school and reviewed other responses from parents gathered by the school.

Inspection team

Gillian Hunter, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Jean Tarry	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is an average-sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils supported by school action, school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is much higher than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for support through the pupil premium funding is very high compared to the national average. The pupil premium is funding to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The school has an additional resource base for pupils aged four to seven years with speech and language difficulties. The unit supports pupils from within the local authority who need specialist support. At the time of the inspection there were ten pupils within the unit.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to outstanding so that pupils can make the best possible progress at all times by:
 - making sure teaching challenges the most-able pupils so they learn at a rapid rate and reach the highest levels of which they are capable
 - making sure that the systems for marking pupils' work is consistent in all classes so they gain a clear understanding of what they need to improve
 - giving pupils time to respond to teachers' written comments about their work and progress
- Improve achievement still further, particularly in writing, by ensuring that:
 - there are regular opportunities for pupils to write increasingly at length through the school day
 - pupils write fluently and with neat, legible handwriting in all their work.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- When children enter the school they have skills which are well below those normally expected for their age. By the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage they have made good progress. Although the standards that pupils reach by the end of Key Stage 1 are still low, compared to where they started, they have made good progress.
- Nationally published information on pupils' attainment and progress does not always give an accurate picture about how well the pupils are doing, because the school's population changes significantly from year to year. For example, by Year 2, in 2013, nine pupils had either left or joined the class over the year. In addition, a large proportion had additional needs; however, most of these pupils made more than expected progress from their starting points.
- In 2013, at the end of Year 6, although pupils had attained below the national expectation they had made very good progress from the end of Year 2. Pupils' books, school data and evidence from lessons show that current achievement is good at Key Stage 2 and so pupils are well-prepared for the next stage of education.
- By the time they leave at the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are on track to reach standards that are close to the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards in writing throughout the school are currently below reading and mathematics. Work in books and the data held by the school shows that writing is improving rapidly. Nevertheless, pupils do not write fluently and at length often enough, and with neat, legible handwriting in all their work.
- Pupils can read well, produce a range of good quality writing and apply their skills to other subjects. For example, pupils in Year 3 produced some compelling writing showing how they could express their feelings and emotions to explain to the reader their views and opinions. These pupils showed good understanding in their written work as well as in drama and were beginning to use inference well.
- Pupils are now making good progress in mathematics across Key Stage 2. Good mathematics teaching is helping pupils to learn new skills quickly and pupils are adept at explaining their reasoning and using mathematics to solve problems. One group of more able Year 6 pupils were able to find the angles of complex shapes and could explain this well.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, including those in the specialist resource base, make the same good progress as other pupils in the school because of the well-focused support provided. By the time they leave, the standards that these pupils reach are above the national average for similar pupils in reading and writing, but below in mathematics.
- Pupils eligible for free school meals make the same good progress as other pupils in the school and their attainment is close to similar pupils nationally. Pupil premium funding has had a good impact on the attainment of pupils who are eligible for free school meals. The gap in attainment between this group and other pupils in the school is narrowing rapidly.
- The most-able pupils are making good progress overall. However, they are not always challenged enough and their progress slows when they are expected to carry out tasks they can already do, rather than learn something new.
- School leaders and all staff foster good relations, tackle discrimination and provide equal opportunity for all pupils to learn. This helps all groups of pupils to make good progress.

The quality of teaching is good

- Good teaching over time across the school promotes pupils' good achievement. The work in pupils' books and monitoring records of school leaders shows that teaching is typically of a good quality. This is helping pupils to make at least good progress throughout the school.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are good. Pupils describe their teachers as 'kind and helpful' and 'they make learning fun and interesting'. Teachers and other adults in all classes have high expectations of the behaviour of pupils and provide activities that are interesting for

them.

- The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is effective. Pupils' individual needs are catered for and they experience success. The school makes sure that the pupils in the Language Unit work alongside their classmates as much as possible. The few pupils for whom English is an additional language receive good teaching targeted to their needs and they acquire new skills quickly as a result.
- During some activities, the most-able pupils are not challenged sufficiently and consequently their progress is not quick enough. School leaders have recognised this issue and have been ensuring that the most-able pupils are receiving additional teaching in mathematics; this is currently raising standards.
- There are good methods in place to check on pupils' progress and pupils' books are marked regularly. The quality of marking of pupils' work is better in writing than in mathematics, but it is not always clear to pupils how to improve their work. In addition, pupils do not always learn from their mistakes because they are not given the opportunity to respond to points made by their teachers.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are friendly, welcoming to visitors and they talk with confidence about their work and the school. They have positive attitudes to learning and work well on their own or in groups because activities are interesting. Most pupils behave in a considerate way to each other and other adults, both in class and around school. They show respect for each other and for adults reflecting the positive ethos of the school.
- Good systems and strategies are in place to reward and improve pupils' behaviour. There are few recorded incidents of poor behaviour and there have been a small number of exclusions in the last three years. There are very few recorded incidents of discriminatory or derogatory language and none was heard during the inspection. Pupils say that these incidents sometimes occur and are always tackled sensitively by staff.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say that they feel safe and have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, including when using the internet.
- Pupils' attendance is slightly below average but is continually improving. Good attendance is promoted well and there is clear guidance for pupils and parents about the importance of attendance and the impact on pupils' achievement. The number of pupils who are absent for prolonged periods has reduced and during the inspection the attendance in classes was excellent.
- Pupils enjoy the wide range of activities and clubs provided for them, especially the range of outdoor activities and visits.
- Most parents spoken to during the inspection and through responses to the online questionnaire indicated they believe that behaviour is good. They think their children are kept safe and commented on how their children enjoyed school.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides good leadership. Systems and methods for checking on the quality of teaching and pupils' progress ensures that teaching continues to improve and promotes pupils' good progress.
- The headteacher is supported by two senior leaders who share leadership responsibility across the school for literacy, numeracy and special needs. They monitor literacy and numeracy by observing lessons, scrutinising the quality of pupils' work and analysing and tracking data. Middle leaders work well as subject leaders and are developing their roles in monitoring and evaluating the impact of actions taken.
- Teaching is well managed and the development of teachers is encouraged with support where

needed. However, the quality of marking varies and at times is not as good as it could be.

- Leaders ensure that procedures for the appraisal of teachers' work are securely in place. The management of teachers' performance ensures that all teachers and other staff have relevant targets to help them improve. Leaders make sure that further training and support for teachers helps them to learn new skills.
- Leaders, managers and governors work well together to foster good relationships and create a welcoming climate for both pupils and their parents. This caters exceptionally well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, with the result that all groups of pupils work and play harmoniously together.
- The primary school sport funding has been used successfully to raise participation levels even further and pupils are now very aware of the need to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Links with the local high school has improved the range of sports activities available to pupils.
- Leaders and governors have used pupil premium funding well and provide good support. The achievement of this group of pupils has improved as a result.
- The school values the support of the local authority, particularly the help of the school adviser who has worked with senior staff to evaluate and improve the quality of teaching.
- Under the leadership of the headteacher, the school is at the heart of the community and there very are strong links with the church.
- Home-school links have improved since the last inspection and are now much stronger especially for vulnerable pupils and their families. The recently appointed parent support worker has developed very good relationships with parents who also attend a range of clubs and workshops. This is having a noticeable impact of the development and progress of these pupils. School leaders and governors are committed to continuing and developing family work still further.
- Key areas of achievement, including pupils' attainment, progress and attendance have improved strongly since the school was last inspected.

The governance of the school:

- Governors are very committed to the school and make sure that school leaders are both supported and challenged. They have a good knowledge of teaching and school performance data because they visit regularly and are very well-informed by reports from the headteacher. They make sure pay is merited and that the performance of teachers, including that of the headteacher, is carefully checked. Budgets are managed well, for example, the pupil premium funding which is raising standards. Governors make sure that safeguarding requirements are met.

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	105085
Local authority	Wirral
Inspection number	444019

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	204
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Wilson
Headteacher	Peter Faragher
Date of previous school inspection	15 July 2010
Telephone number	0151 647 7188
Fax number	0151 650 2185
Email address	schooloffice@thepriory.wirral.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)
[Store St](#)
[Manchester](#)
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2014

