

# Priory Primary School

Limes Road, Priory Estate, Dudley, DY1 4AQ

**Inspection dates** 2–3 July 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	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.

- Strong and highly focused leadership and governance, have greatly improved teaching, learning and pupils' achievement.
- Pupils make good, and sometimes better, progress throughout the school because teaching is now good,
- Recent improvement in pupils' progress is leading to higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards now match the national average.
- Teachers make accurate checks on how well each pupil is doing. They use this information well to provide work that helps pupils build securely on previous learning.
- Pupils behave very well in lessons and around the school. They have good and sometimes excellent attitudes to learning.
- Pupils enjoy school a great deal and are kept safe at all times.
- Leaders regularly carry out detailed checks on the quality of teaching and learning. They use the results rigorously to help teachers improve their skills and to improve the quality of teaching overall.
- Since the previous inspection members of the Interim Executive Board of Governors have used their considerable skills to help move the school forward. Their contribution to helping the school improve has been significant.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Although good, progress in mathematics is not as rapid as it is in reading or writing because there are insufficient opportunities to use and consolidate learning through solving problems.
- Pupils' written work is not always organised well enough and their presentation is, at times, untidy.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are not given enough planned support to develop what they learn in small group sessions during whole-class learning.
- The work of support staff is not monitored or managed as thoroughly as it is for teachers.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 20 lessons. All observations were conducted jointly with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher or an assistant head.
- Inspectors heard pupils read and looked at the work in their books.
- Meetings were held with governors, the senior leadership team and other staff with leadership responsibility. Inspectors spoke to pupils both formally and informally during lesson observations and around the school. An inspector had a meeting with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of documentation, including the school's own judgements on its strengths and weaknesses, and the data it collects on pupils' progress. Documents detailing the school's arrangements for safeguarding were reviewed.
- Questionnaire responses from 52 members of staff were analysed.
- Inspectors took account of the 21 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. In addition, inspectors spoke to parents at the beginning of the school day.

## Inspection team

David Speakman, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Teresa Mason

Additional Inspector

Judith Tulloch

Additional Inspector

## Full report

*In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.*

### Information about this school

- The school is a larger than average-sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils come are White-British. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is well above average. In this school, the additional funding is for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- In 2013, the school did not meet the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- Since the previous inspection a new interim executive board of governors has been formed. The headteacher and all the senior leadership team are new to their roles. Eleven teachers have joined the school and seventeen staff have left.

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

- Make teaching outstanding in order to further raise pupils' achievement by:
  - creating opportunities for pupils to use and apply their basic mathematics skills in problem solving
  - planning for greater support for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs to develop the skills they learn in small group support sessions during whole-class work
  - improve the presentation of pupils' written work.
- Extend the rigorous systems used to manage the performance of teachers to support staff.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Since the previous inspection, pupils' achievement has improved greatly as a result of much better teaching, very close checking of their' progress and quick action to stop them falling behind. In reading and writing, progress is mostly outstanding and in mathematics, good. As a result, gaps in attainment have closed and at Key Stage 2, standards are now average.
- When children start school, their knowledge and understanding are much lower than is typical for their age. Children make good progress in Nursery and Reception and by the time they join Year 1, the proportion achieving the expected level for their age is close to the national average.
- In both Nursery and Reception classes there is a strong emphasis on children developing good communication skills, which has led to most children rapidly developing good speaking skills. As a result, children are developing good relationships with others, which in turn contribute to good learning. Children stay on task for extended periods, both in teacher led activities and those they choose for themselves.
- The most able children are quickly identified and in the Reception Year, children who reach the required levels early are given harder work so they achieve their full potential and are well prepared to join Key Stage 1.
- Pupils in Years 1 and 2 continue to make at least good progress. As a result, standards at Key Stage 1 have improved. Attainment is rapidly closing in on the national average.
- The work in pupils' books confirms that they have made good progress over the last year. In writing, punctuation is better; pupils now use a wide range of vocabulary and include vivid descriptions to make their writing more interesting to read. The most able pupils write well-ordered lengthy pieces of writing, which show a clear improvement over work produced earlier in the school year.
- Although there is still some room for improvement, the presentation of pupils' written work and the organisation of the mathematics calculations is improving. In the past, pupils were allowed to get into bad habits in the presentation of their work. Writing was untidy and letters not well formed, and this was not challenged enough by teachers. Now teachers do not accept untidy work and standards of presentation are starting to improve.
- At Key Stage 2, achievement in reading and writing has been excellent over the last year. Pupils have developed good writing skills. Written work in Year 6 books is at least in line with the levels expected for their age, and much is above. Pupils produce a 'cold write' copy, which is a basic draft. They then edit this, adding interesting words, descriptions and accurately punctuating text. This results in some high quality writing in a range of different styles.
- The school teaches reading well. Outcomes of the Year 1 phonics (letters and the sounds they make) screening test were below average last year. The pupils who did not reach the required level have been given extra support; one-to-one tuition or small group teaching and their reading shows a marked improvement. Systematic teaching of phonics is enabling pupils to develop secure reading skills and enjoy reading. Older pupils enjoy reading greatly. They use it efficiently in their daily work and Year 6 pupils are eagerly awaiting acting out 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' in the school grounds.

- The most able pupils now make good progress. In 2013, the proportion achieving the higher levels was below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. The school's current assessments show great improvement in this area, with much greater proportions working at and set to achieve the higher levels.
- In mathematics progress has been good. There is evidence that pupils are skilled at mental and written calculation. Their books show they can use reasoned arguments when solving problems. However, not all pupils use and apply basic skills to solve problems often enough.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics through effective and targeted support. Their progress is not yet rapid because they still need further support in class to consolidate what they learn in support groups.
- In 2013, despite making the similar progress as other pupils, the attainment of pupils supported by the pupil premium was about two terms behind the others in English and mathematics, reflecting their low starting points. Currently, focused teaching is enabling these pupils to make the same, and sometimes better, progress as others. Their attainment overall is closing in on that of other pupils. Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics of Year 6 pupils funded by the pupil premium is within a half-term of non-qualifying pupils.

### The quality of teaching

is good

- Leadership has been effective in improving the quality of teaching and learning. Following many staff changes, there is now a more settled staff and senior leaders work effectively with teachers to improve teaching. As a result, teaching is at least good with some outstanding practice. This has had a great impact on pupils' progress.
- Learning is best where teachers recognise and take opportunities to quickly move pupils on to the next level of learning. In a Year 2 mathematics lesson, the teacher, through skilled questions, helped pupils move on to higher levels and gain an early understanding of algebra notation.
- Much of the teaching is lively and engages pupils' interest and enthusiasm. In Year 3 science pupils keenly examined the different parts of flowers, discussing their findings with other pupils. Their conversations showed a clear understanding of the functions of different parts, for example talking about how each part contributes to the plant's feeding process. They were totally engaged and it is this type of learning activity that helps pupils behave as well as they do.
- Teachers often make learning memorable by setting the tasks into meaningful contexts. Year 6 learned about probability enthusiastically because it was introduced within a context that was realistic to them and they could see a purpose to what they were learning. This is not always the case.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage enables children to make good and excellent progress from low starting points. Adults are fully aware of how well children are doing and what they need to do next to help them learn quickly. In Literacy, children are taught in ability groups and work is set at the right level. Records of children's progress are kept in 'Learning Journals' which chart children's achievements and are valuable assessments records.
- Teaching assistants support pupils' learning well. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, they work

effectively with children. They support disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs well so they make good progress in small groups and one-to-one support. However, these pupils are not given enough planned support in whole-class lessons by teachers or teaching assistants to re-enforce this learning.

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

- Pupils are proud of their school and speak highly of it. They are proud of being an important part of the school's improvement over the last two years. In the words of one pupil, 'Two years ago we had a bad reputation and we want to prove them wrong.' Pupils take good care of the school buildings and grounds, which are free of any damage, graffiti or litter. Pupils are now showing greater care in the presentation of their work. The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils speak well about behaviour. They say they 'feel safe in school because behaviour is much better than it was in the past.' They fully understand how rewards and sanctions work, say that staff follow procedures consistently and this is having a positive impact on behaviour. They say lessons are rarely interrupted by poor behaviour. The rate of exclusions has dropped this year and there have been none since the beginning of December 2013.
- Behaviour at break times is good and members of the junior leadership team are always on hand to support others during break times. There is much more play equipment available, which keeps pupils occupied. Most parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire or who were spoken to by inspectors feel that behaviour is now good.
- Pupils enjoy school. They say lessons are interesting and they all feel they are achieving. They like school because they are expected to work hard and do their best. Trips to places of interest are enjoyable and pupils can be relied upon to behave whilst out of school.
- Attendance has been below average for some years, but in the last school year, it has improved and is now broadly average.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe at school and are confident that any issues that worry them would be dealt with promptly and effectively. Pupils show a good understanding of internet safety.
- Pupils are aware of the different forms bullying can take and know what to do if they ever need help. They say bullying 'is no longer an issue' and are confident that should it ever happen, it would be taken very seriously and dealt with effectively.

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

- Staff are exceptionally well led by the headteacher and work as an effective team. Since the school's previous inspection, leadership has been very effective in eliminating any teaching that was inadequate or required improvement, so that pupils now make good or better progress.
- The headteacher and governors have appointed a very effective senior leadership team to support the headteacher in her quest for excellence. Between them, they cover each of the key areas in the school and because communication between them is strong, they are able to deal with any issues immediately. Senior leaders have teaching skills to lead by example, which has had a significant impact on improving the quality of teaching and raising pupils' achievement.

- Checking the quality of teaching and learning has been highly effective, regular observations take place. Teachers are required to account for the progress of their pupils in regular pupil progress meetings. Leaders set rigorous targets for the work of teachers but support staff are not yet subject to the same rigorous monitoring.
- Leadership at all levels is strong. There have been some recent changes in subject leadership. Leadership has made sure that those taking over are appropriately skilled and well prepared to be effective in their roles.
- Leadership of special educational needs provision is good. Effective one-to-one and small group support is well organised and closely matched to the needs of pupils and whole-school improvement targets. Pupil progress is regularly checked to ensure quality. However, these pupils do not always get enough support in class to practise the skills learned in support groups.
- The curriculum is carefully planned to engage pupils' interest. There is an appropriate emphasis on developing literacy and numeracy skills from the very earliest age. The curriculum makes good links between subjects so learning is meaningful. This aspect of the curriculum is a key factor in forming pupils' positive attitudes to learning and good behaviour. There is a good level of attention paid to creative aspects of the schools work such as art and drama.
- The curriculum, other school experiences and the school environment support the good promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils' understanding of social and moral aspects is typified by the way pupils of different ages and backgrounds get on well and behave well. Spiritual and cultural development is promoted well through pupils investigating, through learning out of doors, through drama productions and through visitors such as the ice sculptor, which pupils still say 'was amazing.'
- The local authority has played a critical role in the school's improvement since it was placed in special measures. They replaced the governing body with an Interim Executive Board to support and challenge the school. They were involved in the appointment of the headteacher and senior leadership team. They have checked the school's performance regularly and set up a link with an effective school. Recently the local authority has recognised the school leaders are able to continue improving the school and they feel there is no longer a need to provide intensive support.
- Finances are managed well. Pupil premium funding is used well to improve the progress of qualifying pupils by funding pupils to attend school clubs to give equality of opportunity, purchasing learning resources for one-to-one or small group support and through sports coaching to encourage pupils to develop a sense of fair play and team spirit. The school has made detailed arrangements for spending the primary sports funding to improve and widen opportunities for pupils to take part in sports activities and improve teachers' expertise through buying in high quality teaching from sports coaches.

**■ The governance of the school:**

- Governors are proactive in dealing with important issues identified through regular monitoring and through checking the impact they have on school improvement. The Interim Executive Board (IEB) is small in number, but highly effective in contributing to school improvement.
- Governors are regular visitors to the school and have a good knowledge of how well teachers are doing through first-hand experiences and through discussions. They are fully aware of how well the school is doing and how the achievement of pupils compares with other schools.
- They challenge senior leaders on school improvement. They set challenging targets to manage the performance of teachers, making sure pay increases are linked to competence.
- They make sure that all statutory requirements are met, including those for safeguarding.
- A new governing body has been formed ready to take over from the IEB. In order to maintain governors' effectiveness, members of the IEB will serve on the new governing body and will 'buddy' newer ones so they soon develop the skills, knowledge and understanding needed to continue improving the school.



## 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>	103831
<b>Local authority</b>	Dudley
<b>Inspection number</b>	447668

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>	3-11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	533
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Keith Corns
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jill Bennett
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	2 July 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01384 816845
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