

Priory Park Infant School

Almond Road, St Neots, PE19 1DZ

Inspection dates 15–16 July 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	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.

- Achievement is good because Year 2 pupils work at levels of knowledge and understanding which are well above average, especially in reading and speaking and listening.
- Children in Reception make good progress in key areas of learning such as reading, writing and mathematics. This is because practical activities are well planned and used successfully to make learning fun.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language and those supported by pupil premium funding do as well or better than their classmates. This is a significant improvement since last year.
- Teaching has a good impact on pupils' achievement because teachers' expectations are high. The staff plan exciting projects which interest pupils and so they work hard.
- Pupils' attendance is improving and it is above average.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils are polite and respectful young people. This is because their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well supported by staff.
- Older pupils look after younger ones. They work as 'Play Leaders' and assist pupils to sort out any problems they have with others. This means that pupils feel safe in school.
- Leadership, including governance, is good. Leaders have given teachers effective support to develop their skills. This ensures that both pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching are improving.
- Governors understand the strengths and areas for development for the school. They ask school leaders' probing questions about the achievement of different groups or pupils.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Occasionally staff do not explain to pupils in detail how they can reach the next stage of development, especially in writing, and so pupils are not totally clear about how to improve their work.
- Pupils are not always able to sustain the quality of their vocabulary and the accuracy of their sentence structure across longer pieces of writing.
- Leaders do not always record targets for teachers in sufficient detail and so staff are not able to collect evidence that they have met them.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching in 13 lessons. All observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher or two assistant headteachers.
- Discussions were held with senior leaders, three governors, parents and carers, school staff, pupils and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour and scrutinised the school's safeguarding procedures. The inspectors heard pupils read. They looked at pupils' work in books used for literacy and mathematics drawn from across the school.
- The inspectors took account of the online Parent View survey that was completed by 82 parents.
- The inspectors observed the work of the school and looked at documentation including, teachers' planning, the school's development plan, checks on pupils' progress, records of the governing body activities and meetings. They discussed arrangements for managing the performance of staff.

Inspection team

Jackie Cousins, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Sue Hall

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This infant school is average sized.
- Most pupils are White British. A few are from minority ethnic backgrounds; some of these speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium extra funding is below average. These pupils are those who are known to be eligible for free school meals and in the care of 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 through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below average.
- There are three Reception classes and they share an outside area.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement and improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that:
 - helping pupils maintain the accuracy of their sentence structure and their use of ambitious vocabulary when writing at length
 - staff explain more fully how pupils can improve their work and reach the next stage of development, especially in writing.
- Develop leadership and management by making sure that:
 - targets for staff are recorded more precisely so that teachers are able to gather evidence to show that they have met them.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Over the last two years pupils' attainment has improved so it is well above average by the time they leave Year 2. From their starting points pupils' achievement is good.
- Standards in reading are well above average. In the Year 1 check on phonics, pupils performed at average levels in 2013 but subsequently made very good progress and, by the time they leave, most pupils read fluently. The proportion of boys and girls in Year 2 able to use complex skills in reading and speaking and listening shows that more-able pupils are working at high levels. This is because teachers check what pupils know and give them harder work when they are ready for it.
- Attainment in writing in the current Year 2 is a little lower than in other key areas of learning. Pupils are not always able to sustain the quality of their vocabulary and the accuracy of their sentence structure across longer pieces.
- Mathematics results in 2013 were average but this year they improved to above average. Nearly all Year 2 pupils reached the level of attainment expected for their age and a significant proportion were working at above expected levels. Pupils, including those from minority ethnic groups progress well. For example, they learn to solve complicated problems successfully using a wide range of mathematical skills.
- Children enter school with levels of knowledge which are similar to those usually seen in this age-group. They make good progress and this year will leave Reception with above average skills in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make the same good progress as their classmates. This is because one to one tuition is used carefully by teachers to give them the support they need. All pupils are therefore able to play a full part in all activities and have the same opportunities to succeed as other pupils.
- The pupils who speak English an additional language achieve well. Staff ensure that pupils learn about the meaning of words. For instance, pupils record unfamiliar words on white boards and thoughtfully check out their meaning with staff.
- Sports funding is used effectively and so many more pupils take part in physical exercise activities during the school day and in after school clubs, such as football and Zumba. This is helping improve pupils' skills in a range of sports and ensures they understand the importance of a healthy lifestyle.
- Those who are supported by extra pupil premium funding make increasingly good progress. In 2013, eligible pupils were approximately a year behind the others in reading, writing and mathematics. However, the gap in attainment between these pupils and the others in all three subjects has been reduced significantly this year and is now just one term in reading and writing and less than a term in mathematics. This is because their progress is carefully tracked.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching has a good impact on pupils' progress and they develop their key skills well. Teachers expect a great deal from pupils from the start of Reception to the end of Year 2. Children in Reception develop their basic skills productively because staff provide a good balance of well-planned adult-led and child-selected activities. This ensures that they are well prepared for the next stage of education.

- Teachers use questions to deepen pupils' understanding of topics well. As a result pupils learn to explain what they are thinking in detail. Pupils are able to discuss their thoughts effectively with each other before they speak to the class. This improves their language skills and their self-confidence.
- Staff carefully develop pupils' knowledge of letters and the sounds that they make (phonics). In 2013 average numbers of pupils met the standard expected in phonics. This is because staff monitor what pupils do and do not understand. They adapt sessions carefully so that pupils are given work which is not too easy and not too hard. They go on to make good progress in learning to read in Year 2.
- Teachers and support staff make very good use of practical investigations to develop pupils' key skills in both literacy and numeracy. For example, Year 2 pupils learnt to accurately fold and colour in parts of paper shapes before they wrote down equivalent fractions. This ensured that basic skills were understood clearly before pupils moved on to more challenging work.
- Teachers and support staff ensure that all the projects studied by pupils are interesting and well presented, and this ensures pupils are keen to learn about new topics. For example, Year 2 pupils enjoyed learning about the work of Florence Nightingale in a special 'theme' day that allowed them to learn about how nursing changed during the Crimean War.
- Staff get on well with the pupils. They encourage pupils to work hard and so they concentrate effectively and learn to persevere when they find work difficult. Pupils all of ages are encouraged to read a range of books and consequently learn how to work out what complicated words and texts mean.
- Occasionally staff do not discuss effectively with pupils how they can reach the next stage of development, especially in writing and so a few are not clear about how to improve their work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good and they respect people from all backgrounds. Pupils mix together successfully in the classrooms and in the outside areas. In recent years no racial incidents have occurred. Parents, governors and staff all agree that behaviour is good.
- Pupils share equipment fairly. They enjoy break times and play many games outside. This is because 'Play Leaders' from Year 1 and 2 are productively trained to assist pupils to work out any problems they might have with others and involve them fruitfully in activities which keep them fit.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and they keenly attend school. Attendance rose this year and is above average because staff work sensitively with parents and carefully explain how important it is for pupils to attend regularly.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils know who to speak to if they have any concerns. They say that staff are 'helpful' and 'friendly'. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe on the internet because staff explain that passwords and personal information should not be given out. They understand how you use questions to find out if the person is really who they say they are. They know that they should talk to an adult before they take any medicines.

- Bullying is rare and pupils say any minor incidents are quickly resolved by staff. Bad language is not tolerated and pupils know how to handle any incidents which make them feel unhappy or unsafe. No pupils have been excluded in recent years.

The leadership and management are good

- The strong leadership of the headteacher and two assistant headteachers means the school is always looking for the best ways to improve. This year the gap in results between disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs and the others reduced considerably because the special educational needs leaders checked carefully to see how well these pupils were doing.
- Senior leaders work profitably with local school leaders to share new ideas. They carefully evaluate what works and what is less productive. The school development plan includes specific targets so that leaders can assess progress, as well as proven ideas about best practice and how these may be shared with staff.
- Subject leaders keep a close eye on patterns in achievement and astutely support teachers in their teaching. Staff have good opportunities to take part in further training. Teachers and support staff are regularly observed when working with the pupils. Leaders do not always record targets for all staff clearly and so they are not able to gather evidence to demonstrate that they have met them.
- A rich range of topics is planned and so pupils enjoy many exciting projects. Displays around the school successfully celebrate pupils' work. Year 1 pupils painted beautiful landscapes from different parts of the world, such as deserts, because of the good use of resources.
- Pupils enjoy working together on class and whole school projects. They increase their self-esteem when they combine their ideas singing, composing and performing exciting musical projects. The pupils understand what is right and what is wrong. They treat everyone with appropriate respect.
- Safeguarding policies and procedures are followed rigorously. Training for staff in child protection and first aid is up to date. All the necessary checks on staff are recorded clearly in the single central record. Risk assessments are used carefully in school and on trips to keep pupils' safe.
- The school works thoughtfully with the local authority. Using the advice and support offered by local officers, the school has been able to improve the quality of provision and outcomes for children in the Reception classes.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors understand the strengths and areas for development for the school. They understand school data effectively and ask challenging questions about pupils' results. Training is used well to develop their skills. They know that the gap between pupils who are supported by the pupils premium funding and the rest was considerable last year but this year is has reduced a lot. This is because extra funding is used productively to provide one to one tuition. Finances are watched over carefully. Health and safety issues are swiftly followed up by governors, who carefully review all safeguarding procedures to ensure they meet requirements.
 - The governors know about how successfully improved teaching is raising pupils' rates of progress. They are clear about which staff perform particularly well and which would benefit from extra support to improve their skills. They understand that a strong track record is expected from staff before they are promoted and given a higher level of responsibility. Targets set for the performance of the headteacher are thoughtfully monitored by governors.

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	110687
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	442066

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	5–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	245
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Chair	Caroline Carter
Headteacher	Angela Smith
Date of previous school inspection	21 February 2013
Telephone number	01480 398010
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