

The Priory Catholic Voluntary Academy

Raglan Street, Hill Top, Eastwood, Nottingham, NG16 3GT

Inspection dates

21–22 October 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	Good 2
Leadership and management	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2
Early years provision	Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher and senior leaders have high expectations of staff to provide the best possible learning experiences for pupils. They share their experience and expertise with other academies and to train new teachers.
- Leaders at all levels are effective in improving the quality of teaching and committed to continuously raising standards for all pupils.
- Governors know the academy well and effectively hold staff to account for pupils' performance
- Pupils make good progress and reach above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, and disadvantaged pupils, also make good progress and achieve well.
- Provision in the early years is good. Consequently children make good progress. They attain standards at the end of the Reception Year that are above those expected for their age.
- Teaching is good. Teachers have high expectations for the standards of behaviour and achievement of all pupils. Pupils respond to this by doing their best.
- Teachers' marking and feedback to pupils gives them a good understanding of how to improve their work.
- Pupils are proud of their academy and have good attitudes to learning. Behaviour is good and pupils are kept safe, secure and well looked after.
- Attendance has improved and is above average.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development exceptionally well.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not always get the best out of more able pupils in Key Stage 1 because work is sometimes too easy.
- Attainment at Key Stage 1, though improving, is not rising as quickly as in Key Stage 2.
- Parents of pupils in Key Stage 1 and 2 are not given enough information about their child's progress or the work of the academy.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 15 lessons, three of which were seen jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with staff, a group of pupils and the chair of the governing body. A conversation was held with a representative of the academy Trust.
- Inspectors heard pupils read and talked to them informally at break and lunchtime.
- Inspectors took account of the 40 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and the academy's most recent parental survey. They had conversations with parents as they brought their children at the start of the day. Inspectors also considered the 21 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Academy documentation was examined, including data on pupils' current progress and records of governing body meetings, teachers' performance, behaviour, attendance and safeguarding. Documentation relating to the care of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs was also carefully reviewed.

Inspection team

Andrew Stafford, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Renee Robinson

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The Priory Catholic Voluntary Academy converted to become an academy in March 2012, working in partnership with The Saint Robert Lawrence Multi-Academy Trust. When its predecessor school, Priory Catholic Primary, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good.
- The academy works within the Trust to support staff at the other two establishments, and is involved in training new teachers on university graduate programmes.
- The academy is smaller than the average-sized primary school. There is one class in each age group, including Reception. Reception children all attend on a full time basis.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is below average, at seven per cent. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is around five per cent, which is also below the national average. A very small number of pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- About a tenth of the pupils are disadvantaged and eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding for disadvantaged pupils). This is a smaller proportion than average.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- There have been significant changes of staff over the last two years. In January 2013, the governors appointed one new teacher for Key Stage 2, and in September 2013 one new teacher for Key Stage 1. In September 2014, the governors appointed a new teacher to share a job in Key Stage 1, and increased the hours of one teacher to be full-time in Key Stage 2.
- There is a before-school breakfast club, managed by the governing body. It was part of this inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate pupils' progress and raise standards to above average in Key Stage 1 by ensuring that tasks set by teachers make more able pupils think hard in every subject.
- Ensure that parents in Key Stage 1 and 2 receive the same quality of information on their children's progress as parents of early years children, and are informed about the work of the school.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides strong leadership and ensures that all leaders, staff and governors are working together to enable every pupil to achieve as well as they can. High expectations by staff and pupils ensure pupils make good progress and most reach above average standards by the time they leave in Year 6 and develop strong personal skills. Pupils are effectively encouraged to behave well, to learn, have fun, grow and develop together.
- Work to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is especially successful. In an assembly, pupils reflected on how helpful they had been at the academy today, and how helpful they could be when they reached home. The academy provides an interesting and broad range of subjects and additional activities and trips. Music, art, drama and sports have a high profile and pupils enjoy good opportunities to use their skills, particularly in English and mathematics, across different subjects.
- Pupils explore what it means to be British and they study the diversity of faiths and cultures in society. There are aware of how different traditions are celebrated by a range of people and this contributes well to the effectiveness of preparing pupils for life in modern Britain. The academy gives all pupils an equal opportunity to succeed and is very effective at tackling any form of discrimination.
- Senior leaders check the quality of teaching regularly and thoroughly. Trainee teachers and newly qualified teachers are supported well by experienced mentors. Extra support is given to any teacher who needs it so that their practice improves. The performance of teachers is managed very effectively and decisions on pay and salary progression are closely linked to how well teachers improve progress for the pupils in their class.
- All staff with responsibilities contribute well to moving the school forward. The early years lead and subject leaders, especially for English, mathematics and religious education, provide strong support and guidance to colleagues as well as skills and expertise in their areas.
- Pupils' progress is rigorously checked to make sure all groups of pupils are achieving as well as they should. The academy is developing a new system for assessing pupils' achievement, which places emphasis on pupils' depth of knowledge of subjects rather than levels attained.
- Additional funding is used effectively to provide disadvantaged pupils with extra support, particularly in literacy and numeracy. The funding and support is having a very positive impact on their progress, and gaps are closing rapidly.
- Leaders make good use of additional funding for sports to bring specialist expertise into the academy to work alongside teachers to increase their skills and work directly with pupils. It has been particularly effective in promoting pupils' physical well-being and healthy lifestyles. The impact is monitored carefully to ensure that there are significant benefits for pupils.
- Statutory safeguarding arrangements meet current requirements. For instance, all checks to ensure staff are suitable to work with children are completed before appointment. Risk assessments are carried out regularly.
- The academy trust gives good support for many aspects of the academy's work. For example, staff from the trust work together with school staff to jointly moderate standards to make sure evaluation is accurate. They are aware that standards at Key Stage 1 are not as high as Key Stage 2 and are working together to ensure standards rise more quickly.
- Most parents who stated a view would recommend the academy to others. A few parents feel that they do not receive enough information about their children's progress, and inspection findings agree with this concern for parents of pupils in Key Stage 1 and 2.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors have a very clear understanding of the academy’s performance. They are knowledgeable about information on pupils’ achievement and know how well the academy is doing in relation to other schools. Although there are some new governors, they know the academy well as they are well informed by the headteacher and undertake training. There are regular visits and shared reports to help monitor the academy’s work, and in particular about pupils’ achievement. This enables governors to challenge as well as support and hold the academy to account for its performance. They have a clear overview of the quality of teaching from senior leaders, and of how good teaching is rewarded. They support senior leaders with the development of the new curriculum and assessment arrangements. Governors are fully aware of how the academy is spending additional funding such as the pupil premium, and the impact it has on pupils’ achievement. The governing body meets its statutory requirements, including those for safeguarding, and makes sure that finances are managed well.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They enjoy learning at the academy as reflected in their above-average attendance.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning and enjoy their lessons, which help them to make good progress. They settle to work quickly at the start of lessons, and listen to teachers and each other.
- Pupils are very proud of their involvement in maintaining the academy’s behaviour code, which is displayed in all classrooms and elsewhere. A group of pupils acting as door monitors at lunchtime agreed that ‘because we help to make it work, we stick to it, and it’s about treating other people with respect.’
- Year 6 pupils are excellent role models for younger pupils and are very happy to sit with them in the dining hall at lunchtime and set a good example of how to behave well in the academy.
- Pupils are polite and friendly, and were happy to talk to inspectors about their work and their academy. They behave well in the playground, responding to the wide range of activities provided. The very few pupils who find it difficult to manage their own behaviour appropriately are supported effectively.

Safety

- The academy’s work to keep pupils safe and secure is good, and the vast majority of parents who responded to Parent View agree that their children feel safe in the academy.
- Pupils say they are not aware of any bullying. They are confident, however, that if any problems should arise, for example pupils ‘falling out’ with each other, staff help them deal with it quickly and fairly. In discussions, pupils show that they have a good awareness of different types of bullying, including prejudiced-based and cyber-bullying. Pupils have a secure understanding of e-safety.
- The breakfast club provides an excellent start to the day for those who use it. One pupil told an inspector how attending breakfast club ‘helps me to get to the academy on time’.

The quality of teaching is good

- Typically, teaching is good throughout the school. It is best in Key Stage 2. Pupils’ learning in lessons, work in their books and the school’s own checks show that most pupils make good progress during their time in school. This is regardless of ability level or background.
- Staff have high expectations of pupils for their learning and behaviour. As a result, there is a calm, purposeful atmosphere across the academy. Pupils become confident learners who respond well to the mostly challenging work. Teachers’ marking is good and helps pupils improve.

- Teachers ensure that literacy and numeracy skills are developed in every subject. For example, in science, pupils write about their understanding of the circulatory system, referring to atriums, ventricles and valves in the heart.
- Teachers ensure that all pupils are fully engaged in lessons and careful planning includes highly effective opportunities to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. For example, pupils in Year 4 were observed writing about the backgrounds of their different classmates. This promoted very well their understanding of people who had links to other countries and cultures.
- Teaching in the early years is good, especially the teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make). In the phonics screening check in Year 1 in 2013 an above average proportion of pupils met the standard. This was maintained in 2014, and has led to nearly nine out of ten achieving the nationally expected standard. Pupils develop a love of reading and older pupils read for research as well as for pleasure.
- Most teachers enthuse pupils with interesting activities which stimulate their imagination, and tasks are chosen to inspire exciting writing. The teaching of mathematics is good. Teachers systematically develop pupils' ability to use and apply mathematical concepts. This gives pupils the confidence to use their mathematical skills creatively and accurately in their appropriate ability sets.
- Recent training has ensured that support assistants are more effectively deployed by teachers to assist pupils of all abilities, including the more able. Pupils' responses to questions clearly indicate to teachers and teaching assistants how well pupils understand the work they are doing. This ensures that all pupils learn as well as they can.
- Teaching has not enabled pupils to make the same progress in Key Stage 1 as they do in Key Stage 2. This is because, while the quality of teaching is improving, the more-able pupils are not challenged sufficiently to make sure that those who are capable reach the higher levels of attainment.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start in the early years with skills and abilities that are typical for their age. By the time pupils leave in Year 6 they have made good progress and they achieve above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. This prepares them very well for the next step in their education.
- Published results for 2013 for the end of Key Stage 2 indicate that pupils made good progress from the end of Key Stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics. Test results and teacher assessments indicate that pupils who were in Year 6 in 2014 made equally good progress. Checks on progress last year for other year groups show a similar picture is continuing across the academy. The academy records show that progress is accelerating at Key Stage 1 and most pupils are on track to achieve their aspirational targets.
- A focus on motivating pupils to read for pleasure, providing reading areas in classrooms and promoting reading in the newly-stocked library and at home have all had a positive impact on standards for all pupils.
- The achievement of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is good, as is the very small minority from different ethnic backgrounds. This is because these groups are very well supported and appropriately challenged.
- For Year 6 pupils in 2013, the attainment of disadvantaged pupils was approximately one term ahead of other pupils nationally in reading and mathematics, and about two terms in advance of other pupils nationally in writing. Similarly, disadvantaged pupils were more than a term in advance of their classmates in reading and writing, and achieved virtually the same standards in mathematics. Gaps in achievement for pupils lower down the school are closing rapidly due to the fact that staff know and cater very well for the individual learning needs of these pupils.
- In 2013 the proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels at the end of Year 6 were significantly above the national figures in writing, mathematics and spelling, punctuation and grammar, and above the

national figure in reading. In 2014 this was maintained.

- In 2013 attainment at Key Stage 1 was broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics, and progress was not good due to disruptions to teaching and temporary changes to staffing. The proportion of pupils gaining the higher levels at the end of Year 2 in writing and mathematics was below the national average. Staffing is now settled and teaching is improving, but the more able are not reaching their potential at this stage.

The early years provision

is good

- The early years is well led and managed. There is strong teamwork and a good ratio of staff to children. Staff work very effectively to engage parents and are accessible to them at the start and end of the day. This helps children come happily to the academy, ready to focus on their learning.
- Children make good progress. Since converting to an academy, provision and progress has accelerated. Children now enter Year 1 well prepared for further learning. This is shown by the most recent results which show an above average proportion of pupils reach a good level of development.
- A very close check is kept on how well children are doing, and very good liaison with parents enables staff to be made aware of how children are developing at home. This information is used effectively to plan the next steps for learning.
- The provision for children's learning has improved since the academy started. Children are taught well. Teachers plan an extensive range of stimulating activities that fully engage them. Staff quickly identify any children who may have special educational needs and supports them straight away. More-able children are similarly identified and challenged. Careful questioning and discussion continually develop children's language and communication skills.
- Children feel very safe and settle quickly to routines. Staff have clear expectations for behaviour, which children meet. Children are polite and respectful to each other and the adults who work with them.

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	137909
Local authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	448613

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	206
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Helen Leatherland
Headteacher	Anthony Harrison
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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