

Priorswood Primary School

Wedlands, Taunton, TA2 7AD

Inspection dates 18–19 March 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected as an academy
	This inspection:	Requires improvement 3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement 3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement 3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement 3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement 3
Early years provision		Good 2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Teachers do not always challenge pupils enough in mathematics, so that their progress does not match that made in reading and writing.
- The progress of some pupils in mathematics is slow because they do not have a secure knowledge of number bonds and multiplication tables.
- A small number of teachers do not have a good subject knowledge in mathematics and so concepts and skills do not build on what pupils know.
- In Key Stage 2 pupils are given less time to improve their knowledge and skills in mathematics than in English, so their progress is not as good.
- Adults do not consistently promote good behaviour or have high enough expectations of how well pupils can behave.
- The poor behaviour of a few pupils disrupts and slows the learning of other pupils.
- Pupils do not always know how to improve their learning because there are inconsistencies in the marking of pupils' work.
- Changes in leadership at the highest level have caused instability in the school and a lack of consistency. Leaders, managers and governors have not ensured that teaching and achievement have improved enough to be good.
- The monitoring undertaken by leaders and the multi-academy trust has not highlighted the need for the behaviour of some pupils to improve.
- Pupils do not consistently have a passion and enthusiasm for learning.
- Adults do not do enough to ensure that pupils are safe if they go inside the school building at lunchtime.

The school has the following strengths

- In a very short amount of time, the interim headteacher has a strong understanding of how the school needs to improve further and has improved staff morale.
- Provision in the early years is good. From low starting points, children make rapid progress because of the good teaching and support they receive.
- Middle leaders are effective. They have worked hard during a period of instability to bring about improvements and ensure consistency.
- The governing body and multi-academy trust have acted swiftly to improve the quality of leadership at the highest level.
- Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is now in line with national averages, as pupils are making good progress because of the effective teaching they receive.
- The progress made by disadvantaged pupils, those with special educational needs and those who are more able matches the progress made by other pupils across the school.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited 19 lessons, including those where adults worked with individuals or small groups of pupils. Eight of these were observed jointly with the acting headteacher.
- The inspectors heard pupils read, examined work in their books, attended an assembly and observed activities in the playground.
- The inspectors held discussions with pupils, the headteacher, senior and middle leaders and members of the governing body.
- The inspectors held a meeting with a representative from the multi-academy trust.
- Inspectors examined a range of documents, including a summary of the school's own checks on how well it is doing, the school's plans for improvement and the minutes of meetings of the governing body. They also looked at documents showing how the quality of teaching is evaluated, the school's information on pupils' progress, and records relating to pupils' safety, behaviour and attendance.
- The inspectors analysed 19 returns to the on-line Parent View questionnaire and spoke informally to parents to seek their views.
- The inspectors considered the views of 17 staff who returned questionnaires.
- This inspection collected information about the role of the Collaborative Academies Trust as part of a coordinated inspection of schools. The results of this will be reported to the Secretary of State and published on the Ofsted website.

Inspection team

Chris Chamberlain, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Paul Hodson

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is slightly smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- There is a pre-school setting on the same site as the school. This was not inspected as part of this inspection.
- The proportion of pupils who receive the pupil premium (additional government funding for children in the care of the local authority and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals) is higher than the national average.
- Of the pupils, 22% are disabled or have special educational needs. This is above average.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- Reception children attend full time.
- In 2014, the school met the government's floor standards, which set minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Priorswood Primary School converted to become an academy school on 1 April 2013 and is a part of the Collaborative Academies Trust. When its predecessor school, also called Priorswood Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted in February 2013, it was judged to require improvement overall.
- Recently, an achievement adviser from the Collaborative Academies Trust has been working in the school for one day each week to accelerate the progress of the oldest pupils.
- The headteacher is on family leave from the school. An interim headteacher was in post from October 2014 until February 2015. The current interim headteacher has been in post since February 2015.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' achievement in mathematics by ensuring that:
 - teaching consistently challenges all groups of pupils
 - pupils have a secure recall of number bonds and multiplication tables
 - teachers have an effective knowledge of the order in which learning in mathematics helps pupils to learn
 - the guidance given to pupils consistently ensures that they know how to improve their work
 - pupils are given enough time to learning mathematics to develop their skills as well as they do in reading and writing.
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
 - stabilising leadership of the school at the highest level
 - improving the quality of monitoring undertaken by senior and middle leaders, governors and the multi-academy trust.
- Improve the behaviour of pupils by:
 - ensuring that adults have higher expectations of pupils' behaviour in class and consistently use effective approaches for promoting good behaviour
 - checking that low-level disruption from some pupils does not interrupt learning
 - encouraging pupils to develop a passion for learning
 - increasing the monitoring by adults of the school corridors and classrooms during lunchtimes so that pupils are safe at all times of the school day.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management

require improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because leaders at all levels have not acted fast enough to accelerate the progress made by pupils in mathematics or to improve the behaviour of some pupils in school.
- Following her recent appointment, the interim headteacher has already improved pupil behaviour across the school and developed a strong sense of teamwork amongst the adults in school. Teachers say that they are now well supported and agree that the acting headteacher has brought stability to the school. However, governors and the multi-academy trust have not ensured that there is continued stability of leadership at the highest level.
- Middle leaders are effective. During a recent period of instability, middle leaders worked well together to ensure that there was consistency for pupils and adults. However, although middle leaders have identified correct priorities for improvement, they are less effective in monitoring developments in their areas to ensure their work makes a difference.
- The support of the achievement adviser from the multi-academy trust, who works with the oldest pupils, has ensured that these pupils have made rapid progress. This is because lessons have a good level of challenge for all groups. However, monitoring from the multi-academy trust has lacked rigour and not ensured rapid improvements in pupils' progress.
- The school curriculum is stimulating and engaging for the vast majority of pupils most of the time. Pupils enjoy the projects that adults plan for them. In Reception, children were thoroughly involved in finding out about a wide range of animals linked to the book *Handa's Surprise*. Pupils in Year 1 enjoyed investigating which materials are best for waterproofing when focusing on the book *Katie Morag*. However, not enough focus is given to mathematics, so pupils' progress is not fast enough.
- The school's spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision is strong. For example, the school promotes the values of positivity, respect, independence, determination and excellence through assemblies and activities in the classrooms. Pupils' understanding of democracy is developed by the annual elections for the school council and head boy and girl. This effectively prepares pupils for life in modern Britain.
- The school uses the pupil premium grant effectively to support the learning of disadvantaged pupils. An analysis of school data shows that, in 2014, disadvantaged pupils made as much progress and sometimes more progress than other pupils in all year groups across the school. This trend has continued this academic year.
- The school works well with parents. For example, there are curriculum sessions, including phonics and mathematics, for parents to attend to find out how they can help their child at home. The school also provides targeted advice for families who ask for support with their children.
- The school uses the primary school physical education and sport premium successfully to increase teachers' skills and knowledge in the teaching of physical education and sport. The grant has also been used to increase the range of opportunities for pupils to become involved in sporting activities at lunchtime. There are regular clubs for tag rugby, football and netball. Pupils have also become involved in a wider range of sporting tournaments with other local primary schools.
- There is strong evidence that the school works hard to promote equality and tackle discrimination, and is developing more positive relations. For example, boys and girls readily play cricket or football alongside each other at lunchtime. Children are aware of the importance of tolerance and respect. One child commented, 'We are all people, it doesn't matter what colour we are.' Another said, 'It doesn't matter what you look like on the outside it's what's inside that counts.'
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding meet current statutory requirements and are effective.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is provided by the governing body working closely with members of the multi-academy trust, and is increasingly effective.
 - The Collaborative Academies Trust has provided a good level of support for the school. This has included weekly support for the oldest pupils to accelerate progress, and support with school leadership for the interim headteachers. Challenge for the school is provided by the school improvement partner. The multi-academy trust encourages schools to work together. The school has found this opportunity particularly useful.

- The governing body has a good understanding of how pupil premium is used to accelerate the progress of disadvantaged pupils and is aware of the aspects of pupil achievement which require improvement. Governors monitor the budget effectively. Governors are fully aware of how pay decisions are linked to pupil progress and how underperformance is tackled. The governing body regularly undertakes training and understands the importance of bringing people with different skills to join the governing body. They are able to analyse data independently of the headteacher to highlight areas that need improvement. This ensures that governors are fully prepared for the process of setting improvement objectives for the headteacher.
- Governors have responded successfully to a period of instability by appointing a deputy headteacher from another school within the Collaborative Academies Trust to be the acting headteacher for the remainder of this academic year. The governing body has ensured that interim leaders have had additional support with school improvement.
- The governing body and multi-academy trust do not monitor the school sharply enough. There is not a rapid enough focus for improvement on weaknesses, such as poor pupil behaviour in some classes. An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

require improvement

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Children in early years and pupils in Key Stage 1 are well behaved and enthusiastic in lessons. However, some pupils in other year groups do not consistently behave well. They become disengaged from their learning and this slows down the progress that pupils make in lessons.
- Where behaviour is not good, this is sometimes because adults do not have high enough expectations of pupils and are unsure of how to promote good behaviour.
- Attendance is in line with the national average, as parents are discouraged from taking their children out of school in term time. The school has very effective systems in place to ensure that pupils arrive in school on time.
- Pupils are generally polite and well mannered. They were proud to tell inspectors about their school.
- Pupils say that there are very few instances of bullying or name calling in school. They say that they would know what to do if they had a problem or were worried about something.
- Playtimes are well organised and children enjoy playing together. Adult supervision outside is effective and adults have good relationships with pupils.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure requires improvement. Pupils are not always adequately supervised if they go into the school building during lunchtimes. Sometimes, pupils run in the corridors and go into classrooms when they are unsupervised.
- Pupils are aware of the importance of e-safety. They know who to speak to if they have a concern about the use of the internet at home or in school. Pupils have regular opportunities in school to learn about keeping safe when using the internet.
- A large majority of parents agree that their children are kept safe in school. The school's systems for safeguarding are robust. Adults in school have received recent training on safeguarding and vulnerable pupils are well supported. The school environment is safe.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching requires improvement because not all pupils make good enough progress. Teaching is most effective in the classes for the youngest and the oldest pupils. In early Key Stage 2, the progress of pupils is slower because the quality of teaching is inconsistent.
- School leaders have successfully responded to the weaknesses in teaching by appointing new teachers or by moving teachers to different year groups. However, it is too early to judge the impact of these changes.
- Progress in some classes is slower because teachers do not always provide pupils with enough challenge to make sure that pupils of all abilities make rapid progress. Where teaching is good or better, pupils are supported well by additional adults and encouraged to challenge themselves to make very good progress.

For example, in the Year 6 class, pupils are challenged to solve mathematical problems.

- When pupils are challenged in lessons they remain focused on their learning. However, in too many lessons, some pupils are not challenged sufficiently and behaviour deteriorates. This low-level disruption slows down the progress of all pupils.
- Although some teachers give pupils useful suggestions on how to develop or extend their work, marking does not consistently ensure that all pupils understand how to improve. The progress of pupils who do not receive useful feedback on their work is not as good as that of other pupils who do.
- In some classes, pupils' progress is slower in mathematics because teachers do not put enough emphasis on the importance on pupils developing a strong knowledge of number facts and multiplication tables. Sometimes, pupils do not learn mathematics in a way which builds on what they know. Therefore, pupils are not able to to apply their mathematical knowledge to more challenging tasks.
- Teachers give more time to the teaching of writing and reading than they do mathematics. Therefore, pupils do not make as much progress in mathematics as they do in reading and writing.
- Teachers successfully encourage pupils to extend their learning in school by organising interesting homework based on projects in school. Parents are given useful homework guidance which can be found on the school website.
- The school works hard to encourage pupils to read regularly at home. Those who read at least four times a week are given a raffle ticket to enter a prize draw. Classes with the highest proportion of pupils who read at home most frequently are allowed to sit on benches in assembly as a reward. Both of these approaches have encouraged increased levels of reading at home, and so progress in reading has accelerated.
- The teaching of phonics is good. Pupils make rapid progress and the proportion of pupils who reach the standard expected at the Year 1 phonic check has increased and is much closer to the national average.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Children enter the early years with skills and knowledge below those typical for their age. Children make good progress and achieve well, and the majority are suitably prepared for the next stage of their education.
- The good progress continues across Key Stage 1 and attainment by the end of Year 2 is at least in line with national averages.
- Progress is more varied in Key Stage 2. By the end of the key stage, attainment in reading and writing is close to national averages; in mathematics, progress is much slower and attainment in this subject is well below national averages. This is why achievement requires improvement.
- Disadvantaged pupils are well supported and pupil premium funding is used effectively to ensure that these pupils make as much, and sometimes more, progress than other pupils in each year group across the school, particularly in reading and writing. In Key Stage 2, in mathematics, the progress of disadvantaged pupils is not as rapid.
- Despite the good progress made by disadvantaged pupils in most years groups throughout the school, the progress of disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 in 2014 was slower than other pupils nationally in reading and mathematics, but just as good as others nationally in writing. There are still gaps in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and their classmates, as well as with other pupils nationally, although gaps are narrowing. In the 2014 national tests, disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 were two terms behind their classmates in reading, a year behind them in writing and just over one term behind them in mathematics. When compared to other pupils nationally, the disadvantaged pupils were behind by two years in reading, a year in writing and over two years in mathematics.
- The most-able pupils make good progress in each year group. However, on occasions in mathematics, some of these pupils are not given work that is hard enough for them, so their progress slows down. The most able pupils do not achieve the higher levels in mathematics that they do in reading and writing.
- The support given to groups of pupils with special educational needs is very effective because of the good level of support additional adults receive from the special needs coordinator and the effective level of training that they have undertaken. Progress made by disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is good.
- Pupils read enthusiastically. They use their well developed reading skills to interpret more complex words and have the opportunity through the curriculum project, which is based on different stories, authors and genres, to read widely.

The early years provision is good

- From their various starting points, children in the Reception class make good progress and have developed the skills and knowledge ready to make a good start to their learning in Key Stage 1.
- The early years leader regularly analyses progress data and uses these to inform planning, so that gaps in each child's learning can be narrowed through support and challenge.
- Leadership of the early years is good. The additional adults working in the early years are effectively trained, so that they model similar teaching and behaviour strategies to those used by the class teacher. Additional adults also effectively support the teaching of phonics in the early years. The early years leader supports the local pre-school setting, which is on the same site as the Reception class.
- Children are safe and well behaved in the Reception class. Effective relationships between adults and children ensure that children are well supported in the development of their social skills alongside their academic progress. For example, an additional adult used a sand timer to demonstrate to two children how to take turns when using a piece of equipment.
- The quality of teaching is good. Children are given a wide range of activities to explore and investigate to extend their learning. For example, children were encouraged to use a computer tablet to investigate the wide range of animals which live in Africa. At the same time, a slide show of animals, accompanied by music, encouraged a small group of children to make up a simple dance.
- The teacher makes useful suggestions each day to the children about how to extend their learning in each area. Provision is not yet outstanding because, on small number of occasions, the more-able children are not given an effective level of challenge in all the areas of learning when adults question them or when the activity is explained by the teacher.

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	139388
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	449888

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	181
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Simon Peck
Substantive Headteacher	Claire Hepher
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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