

Priory CofE Primary School

Jubilee Road, Trentham, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire, ST4 8EF

Inspection dates 29–30 April 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	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.

- Pupils achieve well. They make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics and are rapidly making up ground that they have lost in the past.
- Increasing proportions of the most-able pupils are reaching the higher standards, particularly in reading and mathematics.
- The curriculum offers pupils many memorable learning experiences. Teachers plan effectively so that pupils use their skills in reading, writing and mathematics in many subjects.
- Teaching is good. Teachers question effectively and have high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour.
- The headteacher is relentless in her drive for improvements in teaching and achievement. She is strongly supported by highly effective senior leaders. Staff are fully supportive of the school's direction and ambitions.
- Leaders check the quality of teaching frequently. They organise highly effective training and well-targeted support for teachers. As a result, pupils' achievement has improved markedly.
- The interim executive board is assiduous in holding school leaders to account for all aspects of their work. This adds considerable strength to the drive for improvements.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They feel safe and valued. They are proud of their school and demonstrate care and respect for each other.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Due to a legacy of weak teaching, pupils' achievement has been low in recent years. While all pupils are now making good progress, a few still have to make up lost ground.
- Pupils' progress in writing is not as strong as in other subjects.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in 18 lessons and through a series of walks around the school with senior leaders. While visiting lessons, inspectors looked at the work in pupils' books and talked to pupils about their learning.
- Inspectors heard some pupils read. They met with groups of pupils to gain their views on the school and spoke informally to staff and pupils as they moved around the school.
- The responses in questionnaires completed by 30 members of staff were considered.
- Inspectors observed playtime and lunchtime activities and visited the before- and after-school club (Link Club).
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, other leaders, the Chair and one other member of the Interim Executive Board (IEB) and a representative of the local authority.
- A range of documentation was taken into consideration. This included: records of the school's checks on the quality of teaching; information about pupils' progress over time; records relating to pupils' behaviour; attendance and safeguarding; minutes of IEB meetings and local authority reviews of the school's progress.
- Inspectors took account of 161 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and spoke to parents of pupils in all year groups as they brought their children to school.

Inspection team

Marilyn Mottram, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Jean Tarry

Additional Inspector

Lindsay Hall

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

- Priory Church of England Primary School is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds and speak English as their first language.
- A below average proportion of pupils are disadvantaged and eligible for support through the pupil premium. This additional government funding is provided for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is in-line with the national average. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is below national average.
- The early years is made up of a Nursery and two Reception classes. Children attend these full time.
- The Link Club provides before- and after-school provision and is managed by the IEB.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which are the minimum expectations for the attainment and progress of pupils by the end of Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school was inspected in April 2013 and judged to require special measures. Since then, it has been monitored five times by Ofsted.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to raise the quality of teaching to the level of the very best so that teachers:
 - ensure that all pupils sustain the current rapid rates of progress
 - identify why some pupils do not make as much progress in writing as they do in other subjects and take steps to rectify this.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, senior leaders and the IEB share a determination that every pupil will 'be the best that they can be'. This shows clearly in the high expectations that they have of staff and pupils. Staff morale and confidence are high. Staff understand the vision for the school and share the ambition. Several members of staff said how proud they are to work at the school. Every member of staff who returned a questionnaire strongly agreed that the school is well led and managed.
- Teaching is closely monitored by leaders at all levels. Findings are used to identify key priorities for further improvements. Teachers are set clear development points to be achieved within strict timescales. Highly effective training and professional development opportunities are carefully organised to match teachers' needs. Significant improvements have been made to the quality of teaching. This is confirmed by the impact this has had on speeding up pupils' progress.
- Well-focused plans for spending the pupil premium funding are meticulously checked through frequent value for money audits. Detailed records are kept of the impact of different support programmes on the achievement of each individual eligible pupil. An increasing number of disadvantaged pupils are now working at the standards expected for their age. This demonstrates the school's commitment to equal opportunities.
- Pupils and staff have benefited from the primary school physical education and sport funding. The school has accessed a range of appropriate staff training programmes. School records show improvements in the quality of teaching and in the breadth of the physical education curriculum. Pupils enjoy a broad range of sporting activities and understand how these activities can help them to keep healthy.
- Pupils speak about enjoying a wide range of subjects including music, art and science. Good links are made between subjects. This is seen in pupils' work around the school, such as the pupils' art collage showing the history of the Staffordshire potteries and the 'scuttlers' made by Year 1 pupils for British science week. This reflects the rich curriculum on offer at the school.
- Leaders at all levels ensure that teachers are confident and able to assess pupils' work accurately against requirements of the new National Curriculum. Staff share a common understanding of their judgements. Leaders are acutely aware that some pupils do not make as much progress in writing as they do in other subjects. Well-focused action plans are in place to address this.
- Many opportunities are provided for pupils to come together and consider aspects of mutual respect, tolerance and justice. During the inspection, pupils in Years 3 to 6 were learning about the Suffragette movement and discussing the issues raised. Through such activities the school tackles discrimination and prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain.
- Displays around the school and work in books show that pupils are encouraged to understand and reflect on what they know about different faiths and beliefs. Pupils talk about their own beliefs and the beliefs of others with confidence and sensitivity. They demonstrate care and respect for each other. This commitment to respectful relationships is set and modelled by leadership and staff at all levels.
- The local authority has provided effective support and challenge for the school. Local authority representatives frequently review the school's progress and provide leaders with specific and relevant indicators for further improvement. Senior leaders and members of the IEB value the availability and quality of the support provided and brokered by the local authority.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The IEB, set up while the school required special measures, is strong and effective. Members bring a wide range of skills and expertise. They receive regular detailed and accurate information about all aspects of the school's performance. They ask pertinent, challenging questions and are ready to seek further explanations and first-hand evidence as necessary. They have high expectations of school leaders. Leaders are held closely to account and, as with the teaching staff, rewards are closely linked to performance.
 - The IEB members are extremely knowledgeable about the quality of teaching and the rates of progress made by pupils. They have supported the headteacher well in tackling weak teaching. IEB members make sure that the school provides value for money. This includes making sure that pupil premium funding is used effectively for the benefit of eligible pupils.
 - The IEB works effectively with leaders to ensure that all statutory safeguarding requirements are met and that training, policies and guidance are up to date.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is good. There is a purposeful buzz at the start of the day. Pupils arrive promptly and take responsibility for moving into the daily routines and settling into their work. They get on well together and they show an eagerness to come to school and to learn. Many pupils told inspectors that 'the best thing about Priory is the people that are in it'.
- Pupils have plenty of opportunities to participate in the running of the school and they do so. For example, pupils can be elected to be Play Leaders, Friendship Buddies or Peer Mediators. There are a range of other pupil groups and councils. These opportunities contribute to the strong ethos in the school of 'rights rather than rules'.
- Pupils are proud of the new playground equipment, outdoor writing areas and games areas. They told inspectors that everyone treats the areas with respect and 'is fair about the rota systems'. They were particularly keen to talk about Phase 3 of their plan to develop the school grounds. Pupils demonstrate a strong sense of ownership and responsibility for their school.
- The Link Club provides a happy, safe and stimulating environment for all pupils to play and learn. Good links are made between activities in the Club and topics taught in school. Expectations of behaviour match the high standards expected in the school. This reinforces learning well and promotes good social skills. Pupils benefit from the time they spend there.
- Incidents of poor behaviour are rare. When they do occur, pupils say that they are dealt with 'quickly and fairly'. Pupils understand and accept the school's Rights and Responsibilities approach to behaviour. They have a strong sense of justice. Pupils' comments include 'our class charters outline the way we behave'. They say: 'In our school, everyone has rights and responsibilities. It's only fair that everyone gets a chance to have their say – but we also have to think about the words we speak to each other. That's only fair.' Pupils are well mannered and welcoming to visitors and to all adults working in school.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. All staff, including non-teaching staff, are well trained in all aspects of keeping pupils safe. Recruitment checks on staff working in school and in the Link Club are rigorous. An appropriate number of staff have first aid qualifications.
- The school is vigilant in teaching pupils how to stay safe. Pupils told inspectors that there is always someone to go to if they are worried. They are confident that teachers will listen to them and take appropriate action.
- Pupils show good awareness of how to avoid risk when working online and what to do if they feel worried. The pupils' E-Safety Council has further strengthened the school's work in this area. They have raised awareness about the dangers of abuse or misuse of digital technologies. Parents told inspectors that they valued the recent presentation made to them by the pupils' E-Safety Council.
- As a result of school initiatives, such as Friends Against Bullying, pupils have an astute understanding of bullying. They said that any incidents were extremely rare. The school's behaviour records confirm this. Pupils told inspectors that, if any incidents do happen, they are taken very seriously and dealt with quickly. Parents who spoke to inspectors agreed.
- Systems for checking pupils' attendance are good. Pupils' attendance is above the national average for primary schools. School records show that the gap between the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and others has narrowed.

The quality of teaching**is good**

- Teachers have high expectations for all pupils. They encourage pupils to support and challenge each other. In a Year 6 class, pupils were questioning each other about the feelings, thoughts and motives of characters in a Harry Potter novel. Pupils were challenging each other to provide evidence from the story to support views. They were exploring the moral issues raised in the story in a mature and sophisticated way. As one pupil said: 'Some of these questions make us think really deeply – and explain what we mean. It's good to do that.' This promotes good comprehension skills and effective speaking and listening.
- Teachers are skilled at matching learning tasks well to pupils' different abilities and needs. Pupils say that they feel 'pushed but not so much that we feel lost'. In Year 4 mathematics lessons, pupils were working together well and mentally drawing upon known multiplication and division facts to solve a range of problems. Teachers responded quickly if pupils needed support. Pupils had opportunities to move onto more challenging tasks if they felt ready. As a result, all pupils, including the most able, made good

progress and had opportunities to work at higher levels in mathematics.

- Classrooms are vibrant and welcoming. Posters and displays effectively support pupils' learning. For example, pupils in Year 4 were eager to use displays and images on the classroom wall to explain the simple functions of the human digestive system to Her Majesty's Inspector. In so doing they were using sophisticated scientific language and were clearly proud to share their new knowledge.
- Teachers plan effective opportunities for pupils to apply their reading, writing and mathematics skills across the wider curriculum. For example, Year 4 used information and communication technology effectively to publish newspaper reports about a disaster in Coronation Street and younger pupils used mathematics skills to explore Edward Lear's poem, *The Quangle Wangle's Hat*.
- Work in pupils' books show that they make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Many pupils make outstanding progress in mathematics and reading. Teachers provide helpful feedback which is appropriate for pupils' age and ability. Even very young children understand the marking systems well. Pupils are given time to respond to teachers' comments and 'fix-it' tasks. As a result, pupils are clear about what they need to do to improve their work further and are eager to do so.
- Adults working with disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are clear about the skills that pupils have mastered. They work closely with teachers to plan sessions and make sure that pupils have the resources that they need to complete their tasks.
- Teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) is effective. Pupils are taught in mixed-aged ability groups so that teaching is targeted to specific needs. Teachers and teaching assistants are well trained and knowledgeable. They demonstrate sounds accurately and have high expectations of pupils.
- Reading aloud is a common feature in lessons. The library is well stocked and inviting. Teachers are skilled at teaching reading and promote reading for pleasure effectively. Pupils choose to read in the library at social times or in the playground reading areas. Reading journals show that pupils read a wide variety of books. As a result, pupils are developing a love of reading and a good knowledge of children's authors.

The achievement of pupils is good

- At the end of Year 2 in 2014, pupils' attainment was above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Attainment in writing was significantly above the national average.
- Attainment at the end of Year 6 in 2014 improved notably on the previous two years. Pupils' test scores were in line with the national average in mathematics, reading and writing. They were slightly above the national average in the test for grammar, punctuation and spelling.
- The most-able pupils are challenged appropriately and achieve to their potential. High quality teaching has led to an increasing proportion of pupils, in every class, working at the higher levels, particularly in reading and mathematics. At the end of Year 6 in 2014, the proportion of pupils attaining Level 5 and Level 6 in reading, writing and mathematics was broadly in line with that found nationally. This was a notable improvement on previous years.
- At the time of the previous inspection, pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics was very low. Between 2013 and 2014, pupils' progress improved significantly in all subjects. By the time they took the end of Key Stage 2 tests, the proportions of pupils making good progress in mathematics, reading and writing matched those found nationally.
- The school's records and the quality of work seen during the inspection confirms that pupils currently in Years 1 to 6 are making consistently good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Many pupils are exceeding this, particularly in reading and mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress from their different starting points. This is because there are robust systems in place for identifying pupils' particular needs quickly. Teachers and teaching assistants provide pupils with effective support and make sure that pupils have appropriate resources to help their learning.
- Children join Nursery with knowledge and skills that are generally typical for their age. During the year they make good progress in all areas of their learning. In 2014, an above average proportion of children left the Reception Year with skills that were in line or above those expected for their age. Children are well prepared to start Year 1.
- Improved teaching of phonics is resulting in more children reaching the standards expected for their age. In the Year 1 phonics screening check in 2014, the proportion of pupils meeting the expected standard was slightly below the national average. The school's records show an increase in the proportion of pupils set to reach expected levels in 2015.
- In the 2014 Key Stage 2 national tests, disadvantaged pupils were just over a year behind other pupils in the school in mathematics and reading. They were around a year and a term behind in writing and in the

test for grammar, punctuation and spelling. Compared to other pupils nationally, disadvantaged pupils were just over a year behind in mathematics, reading and in the test for grammar, punctuation and spelling. They were a year and a term behind in writing. Nevertheless, disadvantaged pupils in Years 1 to 6 are now making at least good progress in writing and many are exceeding this. As a result, gaps between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils in the school are closing quickly in all subjects.

The early years provision

is good

- Children in the early years are receiving a good start to their school life. Children entering the setting are assessed quickly and accurately. Adults work effectively to build on what the children already know and can do.
- Well-planned activities, indoors and outdoors, ensure that children learn how to express their ideas clearly and develop their early reading, writing and mathematics skills quickly. For example, during the inspection children were engaged in different activities linked to a story about *Blackbeard the Pirate*. Children were drawing plans and building a pirate ship with building blocks in the outdoor area. Adults stepped in at appropriate points to help with and extend children's learning and to assess regularly and record their progress. Other children were using their phonic skills to list the treasure found in the sand or write messages in a bottle.
- Adults are effectively deployed to make sure that children receive the right level of support and challenge. For example, more confident writers were encouraged to use their phonic skills to write letters to the Queen informing her about Blackbeard's poor behaviour. As a result, all children make good progress from their different starting points.
- Teachers plan creative activities that capture children's imagination. Consequently, they become enthusiastic learners. This prepares them well for their transition into Year 1.
- Good leadership in the early years makes sure that children's progress is reviewed regularly. Their analyses of outcomes are rigorous and accurate. This level of rigour has led to the rapid improvements seen in the early years provision and in the outcomes for children.
- Arrangements for keeping children safe are highly effective. Children behave well; they increasingly take turns, share with others and develop their confidence in taking responsibility for tasks around the setting.

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	132240
Local authority	Stoke-On-Trent
Inspection number	461198

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	419
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Fiona Dumbelton
Headteacher	Pam Keen
Date of previous school inspection	18 April 2013
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