

Priory Junior School

Priory Road, Gedling, Nottingham NG4 3LE

Inspection dates	16–17 March 2016
Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leadership and management are outstanding. All leaders aim high and have a good track record of improving teaching and outcomes for pupils. The school is very well placed to continue to improve in the future.
- The great majority of parents hold the school in high regard.
- Leaders know the school inside out. Any weaknesses that come to light are addressed.
- The curriculum is interesting and pupils enjoy their lessons. The curriculum is well modified to meet the needs of learners and is well supported by a good range of extra-curricular activities.
- The school strongly promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Relationships throughout the school are excellent.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is much improved since the previous inspection and is now consistently good.
- Pupils show an impressively clear understanding of exactly where they need to focus their efforts to improve their writing and mathematics.
- Pupils' attainment and rates of progress have improved substantially this year. More pupils are making better than expected progress and attaining above expectations for their ages.
- Staff promote outstanding personal development and welfare. Rates of attendance have improved to above-average levels. Pupils are kept very safe in school.
- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. They are polite, kind and considerate and behave extremely well both in the classroom and around school.
- Pupils say they love coming to school. They are proud of their school and work hard and concentrate in lessons. Pupils take great pride in doing their best and in behaving well.
- Governance is strong. Governors know the school well. They have helped the school become better.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills in subjects such as geography, history and science are not well developed.
- The most-able pupils in Years 3 to 5 receive less additional challenge than in Year 6.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Take action to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes to outstanding by:
 - ensuring that pupils are consistently challenged to use their reading, writing and mathematics skills in subjects such as geography, history and science
 - providing greater challenge for the most-able pupils in Years 3 to 5.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding

- The headteacher, working in close partnership with the deputy and assistant headteachers, provides excellent leadership and management. Governance is also very effective. Since the previous inspection, middle leadership has improved considerably and all aspects of leadership and management are now consistently strong.
- The headteacher has ensured that the school's partnerships with the local authority, with an outstanding school, and other primary schools, have helped improve the quality of leadership and management and the quality of teaching at the school.
- The headteacher, fully supported by the governors, the senior leadership team and all staff, has worked tirelessly to ensure that all staff work effectively to support pupils' learning and their personal development and welfare. All are fully committed to empowering pupils to do their best.
- As a result of leaders' actions, teaching and the use of assessment are good and improving.
- All groups of pupils benefit from improved teaching. Pupils are now making much better progress than at the time of the previous inspection and their work shows that more pupils are attaining standards in reading, writing and mathematics above those expected for their ages. Pupils are thoroughly prepared for the next stage of their education and the life of work beyond.
- Leaders continually and rigorously check on all aspects of the school's work. Any weaknesses that come to light are quickly identified and all staff are made aware of them. Action to bring about improvement is taken urgently and effectively. For example, last year reading standards were lower than standards in writing and mathematics. A great deal of highly effective actions have been taken and the quality of teaching of reading and pupils' progress in reading are much improved.
- Leaders keep a close check on the learning of each pupil in the school. Regular meetings are held with each individual teacher to check that teachers' assessments are accurate and to identify any pupil at risk of underachieving. Additional support is then planned to ensure that all can do their best.
- Staff value the high-quality guidance they receive to improve their teaching and pupils' learning. For example, leaders noticed that teachers' questioning skills could be improved. Staff learned together about how to improve the questions they asked. After the training, leaders observed teaching and analysed each member of staff's questioning skills and how that was affecting pupils' learning. Feedback was given and staff learned from one another. Throughout the school, staff now regularly ask pupils very good questions that help them deepen their understanding and accelerate their learning.
- The school has clear policies to guide teachers in their work. For example, to help teachers teach mathematics effectively, there are clear guidelines on how to teach pupils to calculate and to solve problems. Effective checks and guidance ensure that all staff fully understand and implement the school's policies. As a result, the teaching of mathematics has much improved across the school. However, there is more to be done to ensure that pupils use their improved mathematical skills in other subjects.
- Relationships throughout the school are expertly managed. Leaders give great priority to pupils' well-being and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school is strongly committed to promoting equal opportunities for all. The curriculum and the school's values help pupils learn to adopt British values such as tolerance and respect for other ways of life. This is part of their thorough preparation for life in modern Britain.
- Regular attendance, positive attitudes to learning, excellent manners and behaviour are continually promoted at school. Pupils know the importance of these attitudes to learning, and, throughout the day, maintain high standards of concentration and conduct with few reminders from adults.
- The curriculum is wide, varied and interesting and contributes to pupils' positive attitudes to learning and to school. Leaders have revised the curriculum to meet new national requirements and have managed this change to raise teachers' expectations of what pupils in each age group can achieve. Pupils have risen to this challenge and enjoy doing hard work and overcoming difficulties with their learning.
- The curriculum is frequently enhanced by visits, visitors or special themed weeks. Each year group goes on an annual residential visit and pupils look forward to these and find them enjoyable. These visits contribute very well to pupils' social development and broaden their horizons, giving them the opportunity to try out new challenges.
- The curriculum is carefully modified to meet the learning needs of pupils. A number of parents whose children have special educational needs or disability were keen to tell inspectors how sensitively and

effectively the school met their children's needs.

- The most-able pupils now make better progress than at the time of the previous inspection, especially in Year 6 where they receive frequent extra support and challenge. However, this level of challenge is not provided in Years 3 to 5, so their progress in these years is slowed.
- Additional sports funding is used well to provide training opportunities for staff to improve the quality of teaching in physical education lessons and to increase pupils' participation in sporting and physical activity.
- The school uses the pupil premium for disadvantaged pupils effectively. The attainment and progress of this group of pupils is rising well due to the frequent, good-quality additional support they receive.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governance is much improved since the previous inspection. The governing body has reviewed and overhauled its work and now provides strong support and challenge for the school to improve. Governors have a detailed understanding of what is going on in the school and are well versed in analysing performance information to check that the school is serving its pupils as well as it can.
 - The governing body is organised effectively into a number of groups and each group understands its responsibilities. Safeguarding and child protection procedures are regularly checked by governors, who take these responsibilities very seriously.
 - Governors have a clear understanding of the quality of teaching at the school. They gain this both through considering the high-quality summary reports provided by leaders and also by first-hand observations of their own. They check that decisions concerning teachers' salaries are fair and made in line with the school's performance management policies.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders make meticulous checks and the school provides a very safe environment for pupils. Staff training is fully up to date and all understand their responsibilities concerning child protection and safeguarding. Leaders work well with parents, carers and other agencies to ensure that pupils are kept safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment **is good**

- Teaching and the use of assessment are never less than good.
- All teachers ensure that pupils behave exceptionally well and develop strong attitudes to learning. Pupils invariably concentrate and work hard in lessons and take great pride in their work.
- Pupils throughout the school show a very clear understanding of where they need to focus their efforts to improve because teachers provide clear guidance for learning and discuss targets daily with pupils.
- Teachers regularly ask demanding and challenging questions of pupils that help them think carefully about their learning. Teachers are skilful at assessing pupils' learning and spotting the mistakes pupils make. Pupils are then helped to overcome difficulties and to improve their work so that they make good progress.
- Teaching assistants are deployed effectively and trained well. They invariably work in close partnership with teachers to play an important part in guiding pupils' learning. They do this both in whole-class lessons and also in small groups such as guided reading groups, or when providing additional programmes of support for pupils at risk of falling behind.
- There have been many improvements in the teaching of reading this year. The majority of parents attended a recent meeting to help parents support their children's reading at home. The *Reading Wars* film starring Priory Junior pupils, which helped parents see the importance of regular home reading, was highly regarded by parents and many parents said that they found the evening a great help. The pupils recognise that much work has gone on in school this year to raise the profile of reading.
- Writing is taught well. Pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar are all secure. Their extended writing and composition are also good, with an increasing proportion of pupils attaining above the national expectations for their ages.
- Mathematics is also taught well. All staff have good subject knowledge and use mathematical vocabulary carefully and train pupils to do the same. Calculation is taught step by step throughout the school and many opportunities are provided for pupils to apply their mathematics to solve problems. Pupils are taught efficient ways of tackling problems and all staff adopt a common approach.
- Those who find learning more difficult and those who have special educational needs or disability make good progress. Staff provide good-quality additional support in lessons to individuals or small groups.

- The most-able pupils make good progress throughout the school. In Year 6, they are given extensive additional support and challenge each week and, as a consequence, make outstanding progress. There is not the same level of challenge for these pupils in Years 3 to 5.
- Pupils do not always apply their reading, writing and mathematics skills well in other subjects. Teachers are developing their planning to incorporate the particular skills developed in English and mathematics lessons in subjects such as science, history and geography.
- Pupils say that they find the lessons interesting and enjoy the wide range of additional resources the teachers use.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. As a consequence, pupils are happy, confident, very well mannered and very considerate to others.
- Unkindness and bullying are rare. Pupils act very safely and with high levels of respect for the safety of others.
- Pupils are very happy at school and recognise just how well they are looked after. They learn about risks, such as when using the internet or social media, and know to go to an adult if they are concerned about anything.
- Pupils, especially the older ones, enjoy taking responsibility for helping others and for helping make their school better. They are well versed in which aspects of their school need to be improved. One pupil told an inspector, 'We need to up our game on reading this year because last year's results were not good enough.' Another told an inspector, 'This school's all about books.' He was aware of the great push on reading that has taken place in the school this year and was enjoying being part of it.
- Pupils are taught to act as 'buddies' for any pupil who may be feeling lonely or sad at playtime. This teaches them to consider the needs of others and exercise leadership skills.
- Throughout the school, pupils have an exceptionally clear understanding of their own learning needs. They are able, when asked, to say exactly where they need to focus their efforts to improve their writing and mathematics and can point to examples in their work where they have done this.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils speak confidently and proudly about the excellent behaviour in their school and fully understand that it is up to them to help maintain these high standards.
- Pupils' positive attitudes to school and learning are evident in good-quality work in their books, their conduct in lessons and in what they say about their school. Rates of attendance, due to very effective procedures to secure regular attendance, have risen to above-average levels.
- One pupil reflected the views of many when she said, 'This school is like one big family: we all look out for each other.'
- Pupils are consistently polite and welcoming. They were proud to tell inspectors that behaviour is always very good at their school. One pupil described behaviour in the school as 'impeccable'.

Outcomes for pupils are good

- Due to improved teaching and the school's relentless promotion of exemplary attitudes to learning, pupils' attainment and rates of progress are rising well. Pupils are thoroughly prepared for secondary school.
- From average starting points, all groups of pupils make good progress. In reading, writing and mathematics throughout the school more pupils are attaining above national expectations for their ages, and more pupils are making better than expected progress, than at the time of the previous inspection.
- Rates of progress in reading have accelerated substantially this year as a result of a coherent strategy to improve pupils' reading levels. In some subjects, pupils are not using their improved reading skills as well as they could be.
- Frequent good-quality support from teachers and teaching assistants is helping pupils who find learning difficult to achieve well and make good progress. Pupils who have special educational needs or disability make good progress.
- The school's accurate records and pupils' work show that disadvantaged pupils are doing particularly well

this year and there is now little difference between the performance of these pupils and other pupils nationally.

- The school has raised its expectations of all pupils. This is having a very beneficial effect on them and means that the most-able group of pupils make generally good progress in Years 3 to 5. However, the level of challenge they receive is not as great as that experienced by the most-able pupils in Year 6, who make outstanding progress due to the additional support and challenge they receive throughout the week.
- In mathematics, pupils make good progress in both number work and problem solving. Leaders are aware that some pupils' knowledge of number facts such as multiplications tables is below what is expected. This is especially true of middle- and lower-attaining pupils. The school has begun to address this weakness.
- Pupils take great pride in their work and their writing is often of good quality. Because pupils are given very clear guidance on how to improve their work, rates of progress in writing are improving well.
- The greatest rise in standards has been in reading. Good-quality guided reading sessions and many strategies to encourage pupils to read more are accelerating pupils' progress in reading. Many parents are making an important contribution to these rising standards by encouraging reading at home.

School details

Unique reference number	122531
Local authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	10001803

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	205
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Anne Baldry
Headteacher	Susan Curson
Telephone number	0115 952 6100
Website	www.priory-jun.notts.sch.uk
Email address	office@priory-jun.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	9–10 October 2013

Information about this school

- In this smaller-than-average-sized school, very few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below average.
- There is a broadly average proportion of pupils who are supported by the pupil premium. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Teachers in five of the eight classes are new to the school since the previous inspection.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors saw teaching and learning in all classes, including visits made jointly with the headteacher. In addition, a number of shorter visits were made to see particular aspects, such as the teaching of reading. A range of other school activities including playtimes, lunchtimes and an assembly were observed.
- Past and current work of pupils of different abilities in all year groups was scrutinised and some pupils were heard reading.
- Meetings were held with school staff and with five members of the governing body.
- Documents, including plans for school improvement and reports showing the school's view of its own performance, safeguarding documents, and policies and records relating to personal development, behaviour, welfare, safety and attendance were inspected. Information on the performance of the school in comparison with other schools nationally was also analysed. The school's records of pupils' progress were considered.
- Inspectors held short discussions with 19 parents at the beginning of the second day of the inspection. The views of 42 parents who responded to the online 'Parent View' questionnaire were also analysed.
- Inspectors received the views of staff through discussions and by analysing the 23 responses to the inspection survey. They also received the views of pupils through both informal and pre-arranged discussions and through the 11 responses to the inspection pupil questionnaire.
- An interview was held with a representative of the local authority.

Inspection team

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