

Priory School

Fawcett Road, Southsea, Hampshire PO4 0DL

Inspection dates

23–24 November 2016

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The newly appointed school leadership team has focused on improving teaching and learning, resulting in rapidly improved outcomes, notably in the core areas of English and mathematics.
- The headteacher, leadership team and the local governing body are clear about the school's strengths and weaknesses. The school's improvement plan is focused on the right priorities.
- Staff, pupils and parents fully support the headteacher's vision and school's high aspirations of achievement for all.
- School leaders' approach to performance management rightly places improving pupil outcomes as the primary focus for all teachers' development targets.
- Teaching is effective and in most lessons, teachers plan for the different groups of pupils using the school's policy on teaching, learning and assessment well. However, occasionally teachers' expectations of pupils are not high enough, and guidance for improvement is not fully effective.
- Pupils know how to stay safe and the school's safeguarding procedures are highly effective.
- Pupils are proud to be part of the school community, embracing the school's motto, 'enjoy, respect and achieve'.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and throughout the school. Leaders' visibility during lessons and breaktimes provides opportunities for informal pupil conversations with staff. This creates a positive atmosphere.
- School leaders work effectively with the Bohunt Education Trust, especially to support subject leadership. This has helped the school to tackle poor teaching and build leadership capacity successfully.
- From low starting points, most pupils at this school achieve well and reach the standards expected for their age. This includes disadvantaged pupils in most subjects, but not all.
- Most pupils attend regularly, although there is a small group of pupils whose attendance needs to be improved.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Sharpen leaders' monitoring of attendance and improve the strategies used to reduce absence and persistent absence, particularly for disadvantaged pupils, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and girls.
- Further strengthen the quality of teaching and learning so that:
 - pupils know how to improve their work in all subjects
 - teachers have consistently high expectations of all groups and plan lessons to match pupils' needs
 - more disadvantaged pupils make good progress in science and modern foreign languages.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders know their school well. They accurately evaluate its strengths and weaknesses and take effective action when needed. As a result, the school has improved quickly over the last year. Pupils, parents and staff talk enthusiastically about the significant difference that leaders have made. Parents refer to the school as having a 'positive buzz within the community'.
- Robust action taken by leaders has tackled underperformance successfully in most subjects. As a result, pupils' progress is accelerating, notably in core subjects such as English and mathematics.
- Leaders ensure that all staff are clear about their role within the school and are held firmly to account for pupils' progress. Staff have performance management targets, which link well to the intended impact of staff on improving pupils' outcomes. As a result, standards are rising.
- The school's comprehensive monitoring system means that leaders carefully check the quality of learning in classrooms. This allows leaders to: identify teachers who need additional support; create bespoke programmes for teachers to improve their classroom practice; and hone the school's training programme for teachers. Consequently, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment has improved significantly and pupils' outcomes continue to rise.
- Middle leadership in English, mathematics, drama and physical education is strong. Subject leaders share willingly their ideas about assessment and feedback for pupils, which is having a notable impact on the quality of feedback and on how well pupils respond to it. Pupils understand well how to improve their work in most of these subjects.
- The curriculum meets pupils' needs well, ensuring a breadth and focus in key stage 3 on the basic areas such as literacy, where many pupils are behind on entry. Leaders have developed the key stage 4 curriculum so that there is now a good range of pathways for pupils to choose from. Guidance for pupils is effective when they move on to post-16 courses, apprenticeships, training or enter the world of work.
- Leaders have correctly identified the need for a broader curriculum; as a result, some pupils, at key stage 4, study alternative vocational courses at local 14–19 providers. These courses are offered to support pupils who are intending to follow a career in these areas, for example engineering or beauty.
- A wide range of extra-curricular opportunities enhances the curriculum. These include the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme, cultural trips, sport and visits to other countries such as Iceland.
- Leaders have implemented a new behaviour for learning programme this year, which makes it clear for pupils what is and is not acceptable behaviour in lessons. Pupils understand the simple sanctions linked to the behaviour policy and agree that the policy is applied consistently in most lessons when needed.
- Leaders have appropriately adjusted their programme for Year 7 pupils needing extra

support with English and mathematics. This effective catch-up programme is timetabled into the school day. Leaders monitor this aspect closely and pupils' mastery of both subjects is improving quickly.

- Leaders and governors monitor the use of pupil premium funding efficiently, evaluating the impact of actions closely. Actions are raising disadvantaged pupils' outcomes in English and mathematics. Leaders of science and modern foreign languages have adopted similar systems since September. Both faculties have suitable action plans for improvement but it is currently too early to measure progress.
- Leaders responsible for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities have created an impressive programme of support and intervention. The school's training programme has developed staff's expertise on how best to aid this group of pupils in class. As a result, staff are supporting this group of pupils well.
- Pupils', spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is developed well through a joint programme of high-quality assemblies and religious education lessons. Pupils now have a better understanding of differences in modern British society.
- Leaders have identified a need to improve some pupils' resilience as learners and have introduced a programme of mentoring to raise aspirations and support a positive attitude.
- The school's subject leaders have benefited from the support they have received from Bohunt Education Trust's staff. This has improved their ability as middle leaders and subject specialists to monitor the curriculum, teaching and learning and pupils' outcomes. The chief executive officer of the Bohunt Education Trust meets weekly with the headteacher. This positive working relationship helps the school to focus on school improvement.
- Leaders recognise that more is needed to improve attendance of some groups of pupils. As a result, they have restructured the pastoral team and support structure. While there are small improvements since September it is really too early for this change to show any impact on attendance.

Governance of the school

- Governance has improved since the school joined the Bohunt Education Trust. The local governing body has an accurate understanding of how well leaders are raising standards. They are very dedicated to the school and work with members of the Bohunt Education Trust to challenge leaders, deepen their understanding of key issues and monitor standards closely.
- Governors visit the school regularly, and plan to do so even more, to see the school in action and review school improvement first-hand.
- The Bohunt Education Trust monitors school progress well, including checking standards and budgets, to ensure that improvement is sustained.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are highly effective. Leaders and managers responsible for managing safeguarding carry out their roles well, keep pupils safe, and

create a safe culture in the school.

- Clear and appropriate measures are in place to ensure that leaders check the suitability of staff and keep careful records. Leaders and governors are trained in safer recruitment and involved fully in staff interview processes. All staff receive regular updates with respect to safeguarding.
- The work of the designated safeguarding leader, who is also the designated teacher for children looked after, is effective. Support offered to vulnerable pupils is excellent.
- Leaders work with a range of external agencies to support pupils and their families. Effective systems are in place to ensure that actions taken make a difference.
- The school website offers helpful guidance for parents regarding how to best support their child should they be concerned about any safeguarding issues. It also provides details of who to contact and support groups locally. Leaders ensure that pertinent guidance is shared widely.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good and improving. As a result, pupils achieve well in English, mathematics and most other subjects.
- All teachers have good subject knowledge and a clear understanding of the curriculum. Teachers use the school's behaviour for learning policy effectively when needed. This helps pupils to re-engage with their learning, to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding appropriately.
- Teaching is especially effective in English, and practice here is leading the way for other subjects. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils. They have a clear idea what they want pupils to achieve, and plan well to ensure that this happens. Good teaching in this subject means that pupils know how to improve and adjust their work appropriately. Consequently, pupils make good progress.
- The humanities department is using the English team's approach to extended writing. This provides pupils with opportunities to deepen their knowledge and improve their ability to write from different viewpoints.
- Teaching is strong in a range of other subjects. In a drama lesson observed, pupils were learning about mime. All pupils were actively engaged, performing confidently and learning how to comment on each other's performances.
- In most subjects, teachers help pupils understand how to improve their work and deepen their understanding. However, in some subjects, pupils are not clear enough about how to improve their work.
- Teachers work effectively across the curriculum to support pupils who need to catch up in literacy and numeracy. Pupils say these catch-up lessons help them in other lessons.
- Teachers encourage pupils to read well. Year 7 pupils, who read to an inspector, said they enjoy reading.
- Most teachers plan effectively and have high expectations to ensure that pupils, especially the most able, are stretched and challenged. In a Year 8 mathematics lesson, the most able pupils were extending their skills appropriately to calculate

compound and depreciation rates of interest, over specific periods of time. However, this is not consistently the case in all teaching and some opportunities are missed to challenge pupils fully, notably in science and modern foreign languages.

- The Bohunt Education Trust's shared training has helped subject leaders to improve their understanding of the primary key stage 2 curriculum, raising their expectations and adjusting appropriately the key stage 3 curriculum to build effectively on pupils' prior learning.
- Leaders' homework policy is consistently implemented by teachers. Set homework tasks give pupils the opportunity to galvanise and check their understanding.
- Information about pupils' progress is reported well to parents. Parents receive detailed information regarding how well their child is progressing in different subjects.
- The new science curriculum, led by a new subject leader, is engaging more pupils effectively. This is because lessons are made more interesting for pupils and opportunities to embed understanding are prevalent.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils engage well with the programme of personal development and respect the rights of others.
- Teachers and pastoral leaders have created a very friendly community where the majority of pupils are respectful of each other's views and opinions.
- Pupils interviewed during the inspection all commented on the positive relationships with staff as being a contributing factor to their personal development, behaviour and welfare. Pupils said staff 'go the extra mile' for them; for example, some commented positively on extra lessons provided. Some Year 11 pupils referred to the additional support they had received from the headteacher and his leadership team as they had taken a personal interest in the progress they were making in lessons.
- Staff support pupils' well-being and recognise the challenges some pupils face. Leaders and staff provide appropriate support programmes when this is the case. They also monitor the personal development and welfare of those attending The Harbour School to check that they are as good as for other pupils.
- Pupils are respectful of one another and celebrate differences. Stereotyping is challenged by both staff and pupils to create an inclusive school.
- Pupils understand that using homophobic language is wrong. The school's culture of 'enjoy, respect and achieve' has been embedded so all pupils recognise that all types of relationships are equal.
- In assemblies, pupils reflect on spiritual, moral, social and cultural diversity. In a Year 9 assembly, pupils considered thoughtfully different career options. They reflected on which career choice would best suit them to allow them to take their place in society. It encouraged pupils to consider wisely, financial gain against moral motivation. Such activities support pupils' understanding of British values, emphasising well pupils'

freedom of choice.

- Pupils recognise what constitutes bullying and regularly take part in anti-bullying week. Pupil mentors, the school's 'bully box' and an email link provide clear systems for pupils to refer issues to staff.
- Pupils are taught how to stay safe online. They understand the benefits and dangers attached to the use of social media.
- The majority of pupils are positive about their school experiences. They wear their uniform with pride and are rarely late for lessons.
- A large percentage of parents who responded to the parent survey feel that their child is looked after well and is safe, and would recommend this school to other parents.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good, including of those attending The Harbour School.
- Pupils behave well both in lessons and around the school site. They listen politely to others and encourage one another to do well. Pupils, however, do not always show confidence in speaking out or challenging the views of others. The school has recognised this and has implemented a programme of mentoring to develop resilience and improve pupils' confidence.
- The school's behaviour for learning policy is effective. Incidents of poor behaviour in the classroom are declining and this is helping to create a positive culture for learning.
- The school has restructured the pastoral team and is developing its work on attendance. As a result, absentee and persistent absentee percentages are beginning to reduce. More, however, still needs to be achieved to improve attendance for specific groups of pupils, typically drawn from the disadvantaged, those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and the girls.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils' attainment on entry is below the national average and pupils make good progress. In 2016, from these low starting points, pupils made good progress in a range of subjects and standards were in line with those seen nationally overall. The percentage of pupils who achieved a good pass in English and mathematics rose by 14% and was in line with national averages in 2016.
- The most able pupils achieve well overall, making the most rapid gains in English and mathematics. Achievement is accelerating in subjects across the curriculum, despite a lack of challenge in some lessons.
- Pupils studying design technology, physical education and drama achieve well at Priory School. Historically, however, pupils' outcomes in science and modern foreign languages are not as strong as in other areas of the curriculum. Leaders are taking effective action to improve both of these areas and as a result, pupils are now more engaged and making progress in some lessons.
- Disadvantaged pupils achieve well overall because additional government funding is well spent; they do particularly well in English and mathematics. Effective action across

other subjects, including science and modern foreign languages, is improving the progress of this group of pupils so that, while the standards that Year 11 pupils achieved in 2016 were below those of other pupils, the difference is diminishing.

- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported. As a result, the progress of this group of pupils is good and improving. A few pupils benefit from attending an off-site provider, The Harbour School, which provides support and guidance for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs. As a result, these pupils are making progress specific to their need.
- A group of pupils follow alternative vocational courses at 14–19 providers locally. In 2016, 100% of pupils studying these courses passed. Current pupils following similar courses are making progress in line with others nationally.
- Leaders track pupils' progress well across each key stage. They identify any pupils who are falling behind and work with subject leaders to help support pupils' understanding of the broad and balanced curriculum. As a result, the most able pupils in key stage 4 are on track to exceed their school targets.
- The well-taught curriculum at key stage 3 is making a positive difference so that pupils currently in school are starting key stage 4 with higher standards than their peers did previously.
- Pupils in Year 7 follow a more challenging curriculum because of changes in key stage 2. This was evident in a mathematics lesson where most-able pupils were factorising expressions and solving quadratics successfully.
- Pupils appreciate the impartial careers guidance they receive and are well prepared for the next stage of their education as a result. More pupils are securing their career options earlier and, consequently, they are better prepared for the next stage of their career development. All pupils are offered up to two opportunities to visit post-16 providers to find out about courses, apprenticeships or alternative options. The careers adviser on-site supports any pupil who requires extra help and support to identify their next steps. As a result, the percentage of pupils who have not moved on to education, training or employment is reducing.

School details

Unique reference number	141175
Local authority	Portsmouth
Inspection number	10026132

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,183
Appropriate authority	Academy trust
Chair	Mrs Carolyn Barber
Headteacher	Mr Stewart Vaughan
Telephone number	02392 819115
Website	www.priorysouthsea.org
Email address	priory@priorysouthsea.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- Priory School became an academy and joined the Bohunt Education Trust on the 1 September 2014. The Bohunt Education Trust operates four secondary schools: Bohunt School Liphook, Bohunt School Worthing, Bohunt School Wokingham and Priory School.
- The school is a larger than the average secondary school. There are more boys than there are girls on roll. The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged and therefore eligible for pupil premium funding is well above the national average. The percentage of pupils with an education, health and care plan and/or a statement of special educational needs is below the national average.

- Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic groups are below the national average, while the proportion of those who speak English as an additional language is above the national average.
- The entry profile of pupils is significantly below the national average.
- A few pupils attend The Harbour School, which provides support for pupils who have social, emotional and mental health needs.
- A group of pupils attend 14–19 colleges locally to study vocational qualifications.
- The school meets the government's current floor target standards that set minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 36 lessons or part lessons across a range of subjects and year groups. Fifteen of these lessons were joint lesson observations with the school's leadership team.
- Inspectors visited tutor groups and observed an assembly.
- Inspectors met with pupils from all year groups in meetings, in lessons and informally around the school. They also listened to a group of Year 7 pupils read.
- Inspectors and school leaders looked at samples of pupils' written work across a range of abilities, subjects and groups.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders, middle leaders, and newly qualified teachers as well as the chair and representatives of the local governing body. They also met with the chief executive officer and the subject directors of Bohunt Education Trust.
- Inspectors considered the school's policies, including those for: safeguarding and safer recruitment, behaviour, attendance, pupil premium, special educational needs, and the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan. They also looked at records relating to: current pupils' progress, attendance, behaviour logs and exclusions.
- Inspectors reviewed 54 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and 39 responses from parents on Ofsted's free text service. They also took account of the responses from staff and pupils to the online questionnaire.

Inspection team

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Keith Pailthorpe	Ofsted Inspector
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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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