

Priory Roman Catholic Primary School, Torquay

St Catherine's Road, St Marychurch, Torquay, Devon TQ1 4NZ

Inspection dates

13–14 November 2018

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Inadequate

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The quality of teaching has improved but is not yet consistently good across the school. At times, teaching does not provide activities that build on pupils' knowledge and skills so that they make good progress.
- Some of the teaching does not identify or tackle weaknesses in pupils' learning quickly enough. This slows the progress of too many pupils, particularly in writing and mathematics.
- Unresolved weaknesses in pupils' basic writing and arithmetic skills prevents some from reaching the standards of which they are capable, including the most able.
- Children in the early years are not consistently well prepared for Year 1.
- There are too many missed opportunities to reinforce and teach important skills and knowledge, particularly in literacy and numeracy, across all curriculum subjects.
- Leaders' individual plans for targeted pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and disadvantaged pupils, are not consistently implemented well in lessons. This holds some vulnerable pupils back and slows their progress.
- At times, pupils' attitudes to learning are not good enough. This interrupts the enjoyment and achievement of others.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. As a result, they have secured improvements in the school's performance, although there is still more to do to address remaining weaknesses.
- Leaders firmly hold teachers and other staff to account. This is raising expectations and pupils' achievement.
- Leaders promote a positive and inclusive culture for pupils. Staff morale is high.
- The teaching of phonics and reading is good. Consequently, pupils are keen to read, and achievement in this subject is strong.
- Interventions for pupils who speak English as an additional language enable these pupils to do well.
- Safeguarding is effective, including the care for pupils who have complex additional needs.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the consistency of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
 - developing teachers' subject knowledge to plan appropriate next steps for all pupils, particularly in writing and mathematics
 - ensuring teachers respond and adapt quickly to identified weaknesses in pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding
 - improving pupils' understanding of arithmetic and gaining proficiency in applying this to solve a range of problems
 - improving accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar, as well as the quality of handwriting in pupils' writing.
- Improve leadership and management, including in the early years, by:
 - evaluating the effectiveness of the curriculum in how this is preparing pupils for the next stage in their education
 - ensuring individual plans for all targeted pupils raise achievement, including for those with SEND and disadvantaged pupils
 - consistently raising achievement of the most able pupils to reach the highest standards of which they are capable.
- Improve pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning across the school day and in a range of lessons and situations.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders and managers know many of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, and they have worked effectively and successfully to eliminate inadequate teaching. However, some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching remain. This leads to some continued weaknesses in pupils' achievement in pockets across the school.
- Leaders have not checked that individual plans for some targeted pupils, including those with SEND, are being adopted and used by teachers. Consequently, some pupils with specific needs are not routinely benefiting from agreed actions to help them overcome barriers to their learning.
- Leaders use the additional funding for SEN and the pupil premium grant appropriately to provide additional staffing and resources for targeted pupils. However, provision for disadvantaged pupils sometimes lacks precision to enable these pupils to make the accelerated progress they need to catch up quickly. At times, this holds some pupils back.
- Leaders have introduced a range of appropriate activities to accelerate pupils' progress. For example, half-termly meetings with teachers identify pupils who are not progressing quickly enough, and then actions are agreed to improve their progress. However, leaders have not yet ensured that the most able pupils are stretched and challenged consistently to reach the highest standards.
- Leaders have recently introduced a revised approach to the curriculum. Due to its newness, however, it has not been evaluated to ensure that it is fully meeting the needs of pupils and delivering the full range of knowledge and skills for all pupils. For example, some aspects of cross-curricular work are not yet well established, such as mathematics and computing seen in other subjects.
- Leaders increasingly hold teachers and other staff to account for pupils' achievement. The headteacher is well supported by the assistant headteacher, special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) and mathematics subject leader who form a cohesive and determined team. This leadership team is securing the necessary improvements in the school.
- Leaders' plans and actions are mostly robust and fit for purpose. The school improvement plan accurately identifies many of the right priorities. This leads to appropriate professional development and training for staff to improve teaching and learning. For example, training in writing and mathematics is having a clear impact in the school.
- Leaders have created a positive and inclusive culture. Pupils are happy and want to come to school because they feel respected and well cared for. Staff morale is also high. Parents strongly endorse the work of leaders and recognise the many improvements made since the previous inspection.
- Leaders ensure that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is effective. For example, pupils understand how the school's rules and values promote fairness and equality and are founded on principles of democracy. This helps pupils to be tolerant

and show an awareness of fundamental British values.

- Leaders promote reading well across the school. As a result, pupils' achievement and enjoyment of reading is continuing to improve. Leaders have introduced activities to maintain the interest of pupils, such as the school's new approach to teaching reading, and these are working well. The rigour and accuracy of the school's approach to teaching phonics is also effective in getting children off to a good start.
- Leaders and staff know the pupils well. Leaders ensure that staff, such as the SENCo and family support worker (FSW), are well trained and knowledgeable so that they can meet the full range of pupils' complex social and emotional needs.

Governance of the school

- Following the last inspection, governors were slow to respond and too much time was lost after the school was placed in special measures. This significantly slowed the rate of improvement. As such, despite some strong recent improvements, too many inconsistencies remain.
- Trust directors took the decision to intervene and disband the local governing body in 2017 due to concerns that the school was not improving quickly enough. At this time, an interim academy board (IAB) was introduced. This has been effective in providing the challenge and support necessary to address previous weaknesses.
- The IAB and trust leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have ensured that leaders appointed while the school was in special measures have been well supported. They have worked well with school leaders to introduce the right checks and monitoring. These have secured improvements, for example in safeguarding. In addition, high-quality support for the headteacher has enabled her to respond positively and focus well on the most pressing priorities, including tackling inadequate teaching.
- The trust is now formulating plans to reintroduce a governing body to promote strong local representation. This is in line with the trust's recently amended scheme of delegation. A realistic approach and timeline is in place to ensure a smooth transition.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders take prompt and effective action to safeguard pupils. They work extensively with a range of external agencies to keep pupils safe, including health professionals, social care workers and the police.
- Leaders ensure all staff are well trained in safeguarding and child protection matters, including those responsible for breakfast and after-school clubs. Regular monitoring, including head counts and appropriate risk assessments, ensures a more rigorous approach to maintaining pupils' health and well-being.
- School leaders and staff work effectively to provide a nurturing and caring environment for pupils who have complex medical or learning needs. As a result, provision for these pupils ensures their social and emotional well-being, as well as their mental health.

needs, are met.

- Pupils say that they feel safe and happy. Pupils also have a key role to play in taking care of each other. For example, digital leaders and peer mentors provide help and support to their peers when this is needed.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Despite notable improvements, the quality of teaching is variable, and teaching, learning and assessment are not consistently good enough across the school and in the different subjects of the curriculum. This leads to differing rates of progress for pupils, including those with SEND and some of the most able pupils.
- There are times when teaching is not supported well enough by strong subject knowledge. This means that teaching does not always intervene quickly enough to amend activities to provide the right support or challenge for pupils. Consequently, some pupils do not catch up quickly enough, including lower-achieving pupils and disadvantaged pupils.
- At times, teaching does not identify or tackle recurring weaknesses in pupils' work well enough. When this happens, pupils continue to produce work which is below their best. For example, work in books shows pupils repeating mistakes with basic spellings, punctuation and grammar in writing, or with arithmetic in mathematics.
- Teachers' expectations of the pupils have increased. This has led to some improvements in the overall quality of work seen in pupils' books. However, there are still inconsistencies in pupils' work seen in the range of subjects, including for the most able pupils. For example, writing in topic or religious education (RE) books is not generally of the same quality as that in English books.
- Teachers and other adults have positive relationships with pupils. They know the pupils well. Consistent messages and established routines enable pupils to feel supported in lessons.
- Well-structured activities, for example in phonics, and bespoke intervention work for pupils who speak English as an additional language is effective. In these sessions, there are clear expectations and objectives to guide precise next steps. These help pupils and accelerate their progress.
- The teaching of reading and phonics is good. Pupils enjoy reading through a variety of means and activities. They share high-quality modelled texts as part of the school's approach to writing. Furthermore, pupils are strongly encouraged to read, for example, through the school's new reading strategy.
- Strong teaching in some classes enables pupils to make rapid progress in reading, writing and mathematics. These examples of good and better teaching are generally used well by leaders to improve the overall quality of teaching in the school.
- Teachers ensure that agreed non-negotiables, including for behaviour management, are mostly consistently applied. Classrooms are well presented with useful aids, prompts and resources to support pupils' learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- At those times when teaching is not holding the pupils' attention well enough, pupils' attitudes to learning and behaviour can deteriorate. Consequently, sometimes disruptive behaviour interferes with the enjoyment and potential progress in lessons.
- Inconsistent expectations mean that some pupils do not routinely take pride in the full range of their work, or in all subjects. This reduces the quality of their work.
- Pupils enjoy taking a lead in the running of the school through taking on additional responsibilities, for example as Reception buddies, librarians or being part of the Priory Pupil Leadership Team (PPLT). Pupils have a voice and are keen to contribute widely to make the school better for all.
- Pupils and staff speak positively about the recent improvements and shared expectations for behaviour management. The colour card system is well communicated and understood, including through breaktimes. As a result, there has been a decrease in the number of reported incidents, leading to a much calmer atmosphere around the school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Pupils' attendance is similar to the national average. Pupils enjoy coming to school. Leaders work proactively with others to improve attendance, and they have achieved some success.
- However, the proportion of pupils who have persistent absence is high. In these few cases, this adversely affects these pupils' enjoyment and achievement.
- Staff are highly trained and experienced in working with pupils who have significant or complex additional needs. For example, the SENCo, FSW and other specialist learning support assistants (LSAs) work effectively with pupils and families to meet their needs. As a result, personalised and tailored provision helps pupils to settle and access the curriculum. Pupils' social, emotional and mental well-being is placed at the heart of the school's work.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Outcomes in national tests in 2018 showed consistent improvement in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stages 1 and 2. In particular, pupils' progress in key stage 2 reading was above the national average. Writing and mathematics progress measures, when compared to the national benchmarks, were average.
- Current achievement shows a sustained trend of improvement. However, there are

inconsistencies and variations between subjects and year groups. Leaders know where these exist and are taking steps to remedy this weakness.

- Despite an increase in the proportions of pupils reaching the highest standards (greater depth) in 2018 at key stages 1 and 2, there is still more to do to ensure that this is secure across the school. There are some fragilities for the most able and brightest pupils, particularly in writing, which holds some pupils back.
- Currently, variable achievement of some disadvantaged pupils, lower-achieving pupils and those with SEND in reading, writing and mathematics still means that some are not as well prepared for the next stage in their education as they should be. Differences for disadvantaged pupils are diminishing but require further consolidation and improvement.
- Improving the quality of pupils' writing remains a significant challenge for teachers and leaders. Fundamental weaknesses in pupils' editorial skills for punctuation, grammar and spelling prevent many from producing work to the highest standards of which they are capable. However, there is strong evidence in pupils' work to show that they are enjoying writing in a range of situations and for different reasons. Pupils are showing greater flair and emotion to be effective authors.
- Similarly, in mathematics, pupils too often continue to struggle with basic concepts relating to number and arithmetic. While the introduction of activities to rehearse multiplication tables is helping with this, a lack of confidence in understanding numbers and being able to use them hinders the progress of too many pupils. For example, applying mental calculation strategies and selecting the most efficient methods to solve problems is still a weakness, including for lower-achieving pupils who need to catch up.
- The standard of pupils' work across the curriculum and in other subjects is also variable. For example, there is too little application of mathematics and computing in other subjects. This restricts the opportunities for pupils to experience and apply skills and knowledge to wider curricular areas.
- Pupils' outcomes in reading and phonics are strong. In 2018, pupils' progress in reading was above the national average in key stage 2. In Year 1, 100% of pupils met the standard in the phonics screening check. Pupils enjoy reading and sharing books. However, some pupils find transferring their phonics knowledge for spelling and writing difficult.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language make strong progress. They are well supported through precise plans to ensure that they quickly gain the skills, knowledge and understanding to communicate well.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Leaders and teachers do not make best use of assessment or the environment to ensure that children are as consistently well prepared for Year 1 as they could be. In particular, some lower-achieving pupils, including those eligible for the early years premium, do not catch up quickly enough, especially in communication and language, and in their personal, social and emotional development.
- Similarly, leaders and teachers are not identifying those children who may be capable

of exceeding national benchmarks quickly enough. Activities and provision are not targeted well enough to ensure that the brightest children might get off to a flying start.

- Children enjoy the Reception class. They play and interact well together. At times, though, they 'drift' or lose interest during independent activities where these have not been tailored or structured well enough to their needs, for example in the role play area.
- Teachers and other adults know the children's social and emotional needs well. Children are enthusiastic and keen. For example, when participating in physical education (PE) and phonics sessions.
- Children are encouraged to enjoy reading and phonics from the beginning. This is a strength of the school. An inspector observed children using puppets to retell the story of the 'Three Little Pigs'. They did this with confidence and used their knowledge of familiar stories to bring the story and characters to life.
- The early years is very much a part of the school. Staff adopt the same principles and practices, such as how to model stories and writing. This ensures a common approach and continuity across the school.
- Parents feel welcome and valued. There are strong links between home and school. For example, phonics workshops and the online assessment package that the school uses establish positive interactions. Teachers use the information provided by parents to help inform some of their judgements and assessments.
- Arrangements for safeguarding in the early years are effective. Staff are suitably trained, including those who have paediatric first aid training.

School details

Unique reference number	140743
Local authority	Torbay
Inspection number	10034876

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	159
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of the IAB	Helen Crossfield
Headteacher	Cathy Lowry
Telephone number	01803 328 480
Website	www.priory-primary.torbay.sch.uk
Email address	admin@priory-primary.torbay.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	11–12 October 2016

Information about this school

- The Priory Catholic Primary school is smaller than the average-sized primary school. It is part of the Plymouth CAST multi-academy trust. The trust was formed on 1 April 2014.
- Currently the school is being run by an IAB consisting of 4 members. However, full legal responsibility sits with the directors as set out in the scheme of delegation.
- The school has a Reception class as part of the early years provision.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium funding is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is similar to the national average. However, the proportion of those who have an education, health and care plan (EHC plan) is much

higher than the national average.

- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below the national average with the majority from Eastern European countries.
- The school runs a wide range of extra-curricular clubs and activities, including a daily breakfast and after-school club.

Information about this inspection

- This was the fourth monitoring visit undertaken by Her Majesty’s Inspectors since the school was placed in special measures in October 2016. It was deemed a full section 5 to remove the special measures designation in accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005.
- Inspectors observed pupils in lessons in all classes across the school. These included the early years and phonics sessions in key stage 1.
- Discussions took place with the headteacher, assistant headteacher, SENCo, mathematics subject leaders and the early years teacher.
- Additional discussions were held with representatives of the trust. These included the chief executive officer, education and standards manager, members of the IAB and two directors.
- The inspectors gained the views of pupils throughout the inspection, including during discussions at breaktimes.
- The inspectors looked at pupils’ written work with other leaders to establish the current quality of work in books.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read in key stage 1 and 2. They also sampled pupils’ knowledge of phonics in key stage 1.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils and parents to seek their views of the school. The 27 surveys from Parent View were considered by inspectors. In addition, information from face-to-face meetings with staff, including teaching assistants and the business manager, was used to inform the inspection evidence.
- Inspectors scrutinised a number of documents, including meeting minutes, headteacher reports, IAB governor visits, improvement plans and information relating to behaviour, safety and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Stewart Gale, lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Alexander Baxter

Ofsted Inspector

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