

Inspection of Old Priory Junior Academy

Ridgeway, Plympton, Plymouth, Devon PL7 1QN

Inspection dates: 24–25 September 2019

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Old Priory is a calm and harmonious school. Pupils are cheerful and kind towards each other. Pupils told inspectors that they enjoy school and the many extra-curricular activities that Old Priory provides. Pupils like their extra leadership responsibilities, such as being buddies for younger pupils and leading clubs.

Pupils say that they feel safe in school. They say that staff are always available to talk to if they have any concerns. Relationships between staff and pupils are caring and nurturing. Parents appreciate the work of staff. Relationships between home and school have improved significantly over the last twelve months.

Pupils behave well in lessons and around school. Staff have clear systems in place to manage behaviour well. Pupils who spoke with inspectors say that behaviour has improved. Pupils are adamant that bullying does not happen at their school.

Staff ambition for pupils has not been high enough, most notably for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This is because the curriculum is not planned well enough to build on what pupils know and understand. There have been many changes in staffing at all levels. This has had an impact on the leadership of the curriculum.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The quality of education requires improvement. This is because the curriculum is not well organised. Leaders' plans to redesign the curriculum are in hand. However, these are not established across all subjects. Leaders do not check the impact of these plans on pupils' achievement well enough. Subject leaders need a greater knowledge of the curriculum so that they can sequence it appropriately. Teaching does not build systematically on what pupils have learned. Consequently, pupils are not well prepared for secondary school.

The school's reading curriculum is not sequenced effectively. Therefore, pupils do not secure the appropriate knowledge and skills required in key stage 2 to read well. Too little time is given to the fundamental teaching of reading. Teachers share their passion for reading through the 'reading café'. Pupils listen attentively to teachers to gain a love of reading. However, this does not happen often enough. Teachers and leaders are working hard to promote a range of authors. Historically, this has not been effective. Pupils who are behind in their reading, when they join the school in Year 3, are well-supported to catch up. The books they read match their ability, and this helps them to become fluent readers. Leaders have ensured that staff hear disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND read daily. This enables teachers and leaders to keep a close eye on the progress they are making. Staff who help these pupils are skilled in the teaching of phonics.

There are high expectations of behaviour. This enables pupils to settle quickly to their learning. The school values of collaboration, individuality, resilience, ambition, respect and honesty can be seen in the classrooms.

Extra-curricular activities are well planned to help support pupils' personal and social development. Leaders ensure that pupils experience and learn about other cultures and faiths. For example, during the Chinese New Year, leaders arranged for members of the Chinese community to visit the school.

The sequences of work and planned activities for pupils with SEND and pupils who are disadvantaged are too variable across the school. Teaching is most effective when planned activities are adapted to meet pupils' needs. However, too often additional support is not effective. This hinders pupils from reaching their full potential.

The recently appointed headteacher understands what needs to be done to improve the school further. She is ably supported by a committed staff team. Morale is high in the school. Staff say that this has not always been the case. The newly formed local governing body is also passionate to ensure that the school continues to improve. New governors recognise that they have more to learn so that they can challenge leaders well.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders take their responsibilities for the safeguarding of pupils very seriously. They have put in clear and robust systems for safeguarding pupils. Leaders ensure that pupils are safe in and outside of school. Staff vetting checks are fit for purpose, and training for staff is effective. Staff know how to make referrals should they be concerned about a pupil's welfare. As a result, staff are able to use their knowledge and awareness in ensuring that pupils are kept safe. Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe and well looked after in school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some subjects other than English and mathematics are not well planned. Several subjects are not sufficiently ambitious and are not well sequenced to build pupils' knowledge. The content of these subjects is not as well organised as it needs to be to ensure that pupils are ready for the next stage of their education. Leaders need to be sure that plans for these subjects are well designed, carefully sequenced and that end points are clearly identified.
- The reading curriculum is not sequenced effectively. Leaders need to build on their early developments so that the teaching of reading is systematic and well thought out. This is to enable pupils to be successful readers across the curriculum.

- While most SEND and disadvantaged pupils learn well, some pupils do not reach their full potential. This is because the quality of support on offer is variable across the school. The strategic oversight of special educational needs is not rigorous enough. Senior leaders need to check more closely that the curriculum and support is having a positive impact on pupils' achievement.
- Subject leadership in some subjects is not established. Most subject leaders are new to their roles. As a result, they have not yet been able to influence the curriculum areas for which they are responsible. This has contributed to some subjects not being sequenced effectively. Leaders need to ensure that subject leaders are equipped with the necessary skills to drive improvement in their areas of responsibility.
- The local governing body is recently formed. Governors are keen and have the best interests of the pupils at heart. However, there is a variable degree of experience and expertise. New governors need to ensure that they all have the necessary skills and training to be able to hold leaders to account effectively and improve the school further.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	137876
Local authority	Plymouth
Inspection number	10111488
Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	251
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Andrew Bailey
Headteacher	Suzie Ottewell
Website	www.oldpriory.com
Date of previous inspection	15–16 March 2017

Information about this school

- There have been considerable staff changes in recent years. This includes the appointment of a new headteacher in September 2019.
- There is a newly formed local governing body.
- The school is a member of St Christopher’s Multi-Academy Trust. The work of the school is overseen by the board of trustees.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND, including pupils with an education, health and care plan, is in line with the national average.
- The vast majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is well below the national average.
- The school has eight classes. All classes contain two age ranges from Year 3 to Year 6.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, other senior staff, the leader of SEND, class teachers and the designated safeguarding lead.
- The lead inspector had a meeting with three members of the local governing body, including the chair and the chief executive officer of the trust.
- Inspectors visited lessons, looked at pupils' work and spoke to them about their experience of school.
- Inspectors checked the school's approach to safeguarding. They spoke to staff about how they keep pupils safe. Inspectors also asked pupils how they keep themselves safe and what to do if they have concerns.
- Inspectors observed pupils playing at breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- One inspector talked to parents at the beginning of day two of the inspection. 22 responses from Ofsted's online survey, Parent view, were taken into account, along with 22 free-text responses.
- Inspectors considered the 15 responses to the survey for staff and 61 responses to the pupils' survey.
- The inspection focused on reading, writing, science and history. Inspectors also talked to staff about other areas of the curriculum. The lead inspector reviewed the school's plans for improvement.

Inspection team

Matt Middlemore, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Craig Hayes

Ofsted Inspector

Martin Bragg

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