

Inspection of a good school: The Priors School

School Lane, Priors Marston, Southam, Warwickshire CV47 7RR

Inspection dates:

28 November 2019

Outcome

The Priors School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

This school has a family feel. Staff know all the pupils well. They care for pupils' well-being. Pupils are proud of their school. Pupils are happy and confident. They are friendly and play and work well with their classmates.

Leaders and staff want all pupils to experience an education that helps them to become confident and self-reliant learners. They want pupils to value their individuality. Pupils rise to these expectations and their personalities shine through.

There is a calm atmosphere in classrooms and around the school. Consequently, pupils can learn without distraction. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They get along well with each other. Pupils are aware that their actions can have positive and negative consequences. Bullying is extremely rare, but when it does happen staff deal with it immediately.

Pupils value the wide range of after-school clubs and trips that make their learning more interesting. There is something for everyone. Pupils speak enthusiastically about the eco-club and the recent visit to a Hindu temple.

Parents value the friendly, welcoming feel of the school. They say, 'It's a small, friendly place that is very nurturing.' Parents appreciate the opportunities that their children are given and the friendly nature of the staff.

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

When children join the Reception class they settle quickly and are ready to learn. This is because staff work closely with the nursery that is based on the school site. Staff work closely with families, even before their children start at the school. This continues throughout the school year. Activities build on what children already know because the order of learning is well planned. Children's learning behaviours are exceptional. They listen carefully, answer questions with confidence, display curiosity and work

independently, when required. Strong relationships exist between staff and children. Children are looked after and nurtured.

The school's curriculum is well developed in most subjects, including English and mathematics. Teachers know what to teach and the order in which it needs to be taught. Teachers plan lessons that build on what pupils have learned before. Consequently, pupils' knowledge and skills are developed consistently well over time. In these subjects pupils achieve well.

In design and technology and modern foreign languages the order of learning is not as well planned. Lessons do not always build on what pupils already know and understand. This leads to gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills. Pupils do not achieve as well in these subjects.

Teachers plan learning that is nearly always purposeful and interesting. Work is well matched to pupils' needs, including the most able. As a result, pupils are fully engaged in their learning. Pupils' understanding and thinking is checked and deepened by teachers' and teaching assistants' skilful questioning. Staff support pupils to arrive at a solution when they are struggling with a question or idea. Pupils are not afraid to ask for help or make a mistake.

Staff have high expectations of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). These pupils are fully included in all lessons and activities. They complete work independently or with an appropriate level of support. Pupils with SEND achieve well across the school.

The teaching of reading is given a high priority. It is at the centre of the curriculum. Staff possess excellent subject knowledge due to high-quality training. Phonics teaching is of a consistently high standard. Pupils read regularly in school and at home. They are developing a love of reading and read fluently and confidently.

Pupils are knowledgeable about how to keep themselves safe online. They speak confidently and knowledgeably about the need for a balanced diet and regular exercise to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Pupils speak enthusiastically about the different jobs they can undertake around the school, such as lunchtime or house point monitors. Pupils value opportunities to take on positions of responsibility.

Leaders, teachers and support staff work well together. Staff are proud to be part of the school community. The school is well led. Pupils are at the centre of all decisions. Staff value the training they have received. They give examples of how it has helped them to become better teachers. Staff agree that leaders are considerate of their well-being. They appreciate this immensely.

Governors are committed to helping the school provide the best possible education for its pupils. They have a presence within the school. Governors support and challenge leaders to bring about improvements. They make thorough checks on the provision for English and mathematics. However, they are less confident when making checks on the quality of education in other subjects.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff know that keeping pupils safe is everyone's responsibility and their highest priority. Leaders check staff's suitability to work with children before they start to work at the school. Leaders ensure that staff are well trained. Consequently, staff know how to spot any signs that may raise concerns about a pupil's welfare. They pass on all concerns, even if they appear insignificant. They leave nothing to chance. Pupils learn about how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations, in school and out of school. Pupils feel safe, attributing this to staff's caring and thoughtful nature.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's curriculum is coherently planned and well sequenced in most subjects. However, this is not the case in other subjects, including design and technology and modern foreign languages. Consequently, pupils do not achieve as well as they could in these subjects. Leaders need to build on the work already started to develop these curriculum areas further. They need to be planned and ordered to develop pupils' knowledge and skills over time.
- Governors carry out their duties with professionalism and diligence. This includes monitoring the quality of education across the school. They make detailed checks on English and mathematics. However, their checks on the foundation subjects are less effective. As a result, they do not have as clear an overview of these areas as they do in English and mathematics. Governors should further develop their understanding of the whole curriculum. Consequently, they will be better informed and more able to hold school leaders to account for the quality of education in all curriculum areas.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good on 30 April to 1 May 2015.

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	137488
Local authority	Warwickshire
Inspection number	10130585
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	75
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Shelagh Moore
Headteacher	Ricky Emms
Website	www.thepriorsschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	30 April–1 May 2015

Information about this school

- The school has a breakfast club and after-school club. This provision is managed by the school.
- There is a nursery operating on the school site. This provision is inspected separately by Ofsted.

Information about this inspection

- We held meetings with the headteacher and five members of the governing body. We held a telephone conversation with the chairperson of the Warwickshire Consortium 9 – Southam and Warwick.
- We held meetings with the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo), the designated safeguarding lead and the early years leader.
- As part of the inspection, we completed deep dives in design and technology, reading and mathematics. We met with groups of pupils, curriculum leaders and teachers to talk about the quality of education at the school.
- We made visits to classrooms. Many of these visits were with curriculum leaders or the headteacher.

- Several pupils read to us.
- We spoke with pupils formally and informally about their learning and experiences at school. We looked at pupils' work to evaluate the delivery of the curriculum.
- Safeguarding documents were checked, including the checks that leaders make on staff's suitability to work with children prior to employment. We checked that safeguarding policies and procedures are implemented effectively across the school.
- We talked to parents after school. The 31 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, the 23 free-text responses received during the inspection and the 13 responses to Ofsted's staff survey were considered.
- We considered a range of documentation provided by the school. We looked at the school's self-evaluation, school development plan, school policies, curriculum documents and published information about pupils' performance.
- We looked at published information on the school's website.

Inspection team

Wayne Simner, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Michael Appleby

Ofsted Inspector

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