

Inspection of a good school: Priory Junior School

Priory Road, Gedling, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire NG4 3LE

Inspection dates:

14–15 January 2020

Outcome

Priory Junior School continues to be a good school.

However, inspectors have some concerns that standards may be declining, as set out below.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to school. They describe it as a kind and caring place to learn. They feel safe in school because they are confident and say that adults will 'look out for us and make sure we're OK'. Teachers have high expectations of pupils. They encourage them to do their best. However, the curriculum does not ensure that all pupils achieve as well as they could in all subjects.

Pupils know and understand the school's 'PRIDE' (peace, respect, independence, determination and equality) values well. This is reflected in their high standards of behaviour. They listen carefully to teachers, try hard and take care with their work. They are respectful towards each other and work well together. They told me that, 'Everyone is accepted in this school; it's OK to be different.' Bullying is rare. Pupils trust that adults will act quickly to sort out problems.

Pupils value the wide range of activities and residential visits that the school provides. They enjoy the after-school clubs and taking part in competitions with other schools. They look after the school environment, produce a school newspaper, run the 'PRIDE' reward scheme and take part in the school parliament.

Parents appreciate how staff care and support their children.

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

The new headteacher and senior leaders have developed an enthusiastic staff team. They share a strong sense of purpose. Leaders provide staff with training that helps them to improve their delivery of the curriculum. As a result, teachers model new ideas to pupils well. This helps pupils to understand new learning quickly.

Leaders have started to review and improve the curriculum. They have begun to look closely at the skills and knowledge that they want pupils to learn. They have done this fully in some subjects, such as science, but not in others. Not all subjects are well planned and sequenced. Pupils are not helped to know more and remember more in these subjects.

Teachers are skilled in creating a positive environment for learning. They set clear routines and expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils attend school well.

Leaders have a plan in place to improve the teaching of reading. There are opportunities for pupils to read every day. Teachers are also using a new approach to widen pupils' reading and develop their vocabulary. Pupils told me that they are enjoying reading more. However, leaders need to do more for pupils who are at an early stage of reading. Pupils who need to catch up are not consistently taught the phonics skills that they need in order to read words correctly. Teachers do not provide pupils with reading books that are matched to the sounds they have learned. For some pupils, this stops them reading accurately and confidently.

The mathematics leader provides valuable training and support for staff. This has resulted in a strong, consistent approach to the teaching of mathematics in all years. Pupils use what they already know and understand, to help them grasp the next steps in their learning. Teachers provide regular opportunities for pupils to use their knowledge to solve problems. This helps pupils deepen their understanding.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported effectively. Teachers adapt learning activities to enable pupils to access learning. Teaching assistants rehearse new learning with pupils. They provide sensitive support when pupils need it. Pupils told me that they value the help they receive.

Staff foster pupils' personal development well. This is a strength of the school. Pupils take part in a wide range of activities to help them to become good citizens. They have a good awareness of a range of faiths and cultures. The 'Calm Corner' and 'Den' help support pupils' mental health and well-being at lunchtimes.

Leaders and governors are mindful of staff workload and work-life balance. Staff feel supported and valued. They enjoy working at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding across the school. Staff are well trained and are aware of the signs that a pupil may be at risk of harm. They know how to report their concerns. Leaders act quickly to seek advice and support from other agencies. They make sure that pupils and families get help when they need it.

Pupils know that there is always a trusted adult in school that they can go to for help. They are taught how to stay safe online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's curriculum is not yet coherently planned and sequenced in some subjects. As a result, pupils do not gain a depth of knowledge and understanding across the curriculum. Leaders need to ensure that the subject curriculum plans are ambitious and include the steps in learning they want pupils to acquire and remember over time.
- Leaders are not implementing a structured approach to the teaching of phonics for pupils who are at an earlier stage of reading. As a result, pupils do not catch up quickly or develop confidence and accuracy in their reading. Leaders need to ensure that staff receive the training they need to teach phonics well and ensure that reading books are closely matched to pupils' level of phonics understanding.

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 Priory Junior School to be good on 16–17 March 2016.

How can I feedback 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 are the school and you are 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	122531
Local authority	Nottinghamshire County Council
Inspection number	10121248
Type of school	Junior
School category	Community school
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	238
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Sharon Tunncliffe
Headteacher	Alison Brown
Website	www.priory-jun.notts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	16–17 March 2016

Information about this school

- The new headteacher took up her post in January 2019. The school works in partnership with three other schools in the local area, forming the Gedling family of schools.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.
- I met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, a senior leader, the special educational needs coordinator, subject leaders and other staff.
- I met with the chair and vice-chair of the governing body and with two other governors.
- Reading, mathematics and science were evaluated in depth. I spoke with subject leaders, pupils and teachers, looked at pupils' work and visited lessons. I also listened to pupils read with a member of staff.
- I observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school.
- I held a telephone discussion with a local authority adviser.

- I spoke with parents informally at the end of the day. I took account of the 60 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and the seven responses to the survey for staff. There were no responses to the pupils' survey.
- I reviewed a wide range of documents relating to safeguarding. I met with the designated safeguarding leader.

Inspection team

Heather Hawkes, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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