

# Inspection of a good school: The Priory Church of England School

Queens Road, Wimbledon, London SW19 8LX

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Inspection dates:

19 and 20 October 2021

## **Outcome**

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this initial (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a full inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a full (section 5) inspection.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils described their school as a friendly and welcoming place. They said that they feel safe and well cared for. They know how to keep themselves safe when working online. Pupils reported that bullying is rare, but when it does happen, staff always deal with it effectively.

Pupils are polite and confident. They behave well during social times and do not disrupt lessons or distract each other in class. They understand the need to work hard, and lots report that they enjoy being encouraged to try even harder things.

Leaders are focusing on improving the school further. They want pupils to achieve well in a range of subjects. However, in some subjects, teaching does not help pupils to develop and deepen their knowledge.

The vast majority of parents and carers are positive about the school. They were particularly appreciative of the work done to support learning and deal with the impact of COVID-19. Leaders plan to extend the range of trips and clubs available to pupils once restrictions are lifted further.

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

The school has undergone many changes since the start of this academic year. A new leadership team and several new teachers have joined the school. Leaders have acted swiftly to identify what needs to improve.

Leaders have developed a well-planned curriculum in all subjects. They have identified what they want pupils to know and in what order. However, these plans are not embedded very well. Throughout the school, subject plans are delivered inconsistently.

For example, in mathematics, some teaching enables pupils to increase their knowledge step by step. Teachers make sure that pupils' understanding is secure before moving on to new things. However, sometimes, teaching does not build as well on what pupils already know and can do.

In history, geography and French, subject plans are ambitious and well organised. However, these plans are not implemented consistently. This means that pupils struggle to remember the key knowledge in each lesson or unit of work. Teachers' expectations in these subjects are variable. The work in pupils' books shows that they have not covered all the things they should have in each subject. This reduces how much pupils know, remember and can do. Some pupils were not able to talk confidently about what they have learned in history or French, for example. Teachers' checks on pupils' learning are inconsistent. Sometimes, these do not identify what pupils need to know next.

Leaders have prioritised reading. A new phonics programme has been introduced for early years and Years 1 and 2. Teachers in these year groups have been trained to deliver the programme. Pupils learn to read well and quickly build their phonic knowledge. Teachers are quick to spot pupils who are struggling. These pupils receive extra help from well-trained staff. This helps them to catch up and develops their confidence. Pupils enjoy reading. They were keen to talk about their favourite books and authors. They particularly like the whole-class reading sessions. Teachers read to pupils regularly. Teachers choose books carefully to expose pupils to high-quality texts.

In Years 3 and 4, some pupils are still learning to read fluently. However, in these year groups, not all staff have been trained to deliver the school's phonics programme. This means that sometimes, these pupils do not get the help they need to catch up swiftly. Plans are in place to train all staff in these year groups to deliver the phonics programme.

Children do well in early years. They respond to teachers' high expectations of their learning and behaviour. Children take turns, share and cooperate. Teachers make sure that children's mathematical knowledge is secure. Children enjoy many opportunities to compare, count, measure and solve problems.

Leaders make sure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive the help they need. Teachers and teaching assistants make sure that these pupils are well supported in lessons.

Pupils' behaviour in class is positive. Pupils focus well and concentrate. Their learning is not affected by low-level disruption. Teachers promote pupils' wider development through assemblies and in lessons. Pupils learn about the school's values. These emphasise, for instance, the role that being resilient and reflective can play in learning effectively. Year 6 pupils described the importance of upholding the school's values in their everyday lives.

Staff, including those at the early stage of their careers, are appreciative of the work leaders do and say that they feel supported.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have ensured that there is a strong culture of safeguarding. Staff are confident about their role in keeping pupils safe. Staff are aware that 'it could happen here'. They know how to identify and report any concerns. Leaders follow up any concerns diligently. Leaders work with external agencies, including the local authority, to keep pupils safe.

Leaders ensure that pupils learn how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations, including how to report any worries about bullying or unkind behaviour.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Plans in subjects such as history, geography and French are well sequenced and ambitious. However, these subjects are not delivered consistently well. Leaders do not ensure that pupils build their knowledge securely over time in all subjects. Leaders need to ensure that the curriculum plans in all subjects are taught as intended so that pupils develop secure knowledge and remember what they have been taught. Leaders need to ensure that these subjects are given the time they need to be delivered well.
- Not all staff are trained to teach pupils to read using the school's phonics programme. This affects pupils' ability to read confidently and accurately, particularly in Years 3 and 4. Leaders should ensure that all staff are well trained to deliver the phonics programme consistently.

## **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 or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, 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 deem the section 8 inspection a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in November 2011.

## 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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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

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| <b>Unique reference number</b>             | 102672   |
| <b>Local authority</b>                     | Merton   |
| <b>Inspection number</b>                   | 10200160   |
| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Primary  |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Maintained voluntary aided   |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 3 to 11  |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed  |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 217  |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body   |
| <b>Chair of governing body</b>             | Anand Shukla   |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Lesley Steward (Interim Headteacher)   |
| <b>Website</b>                             | <a href="http://www.thepriory.merton.sch.uk">www.thepriory.merton.sch.uk</a> |
| <b>Date of previous inspection</b>         | 5 October 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005                    |

## Information about this school

- The school has a Christian religious character. The school's most recent section 48 inspection took place in December 2016.
- A new interim headteacher, deputy headteacher, mathematics leader, literacy leader and several class teachers were appointed in September 2021.
- The school runs a breakfast club and an after-school club.

## Information about this inspection

This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders, and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.

- During the inspection, the inspector held meetings with the interim headteacher, the deputy headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, subject leaders and three members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. The inspector spoke with a representative of the local authority on the telephone.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector observed pupils reading to members of staff. The inspector also considered pupils' learning in some other subjects.
- The inspector scrutinised a range of safeguarding documentation. The inspector examined the single central record of staff suitability checks. The inspector also spoke with leaders and staff to check how well they understood their safeguarding responsibilities.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at social times. She spoke with parents to gather their views about the school.
- The inspector considered the 51 responses to Ofsted Parent View, including 50 free-text comments. Seven responses to Ofsted's staff survey were also taken into account.

### **Inspection team**

Lou Anderson, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
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M1 2WD

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