

Inspection of Priory Roman Catholic Primary School, Torquay

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

Inspection dates: 28 and 29 September 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires Improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Priory is a happy and welcoming school. Pupils describe how values such as kindness and integrity run through daily life. This can be seen in the warm interactions between staff and pupils, as well as the vibrant learning environment. As a result of this, pupils feel safe and enjoy school. One parent's comment that captures the opinion of many was, 'Children are at the heart of all decisions. The school is like a family.'

Leaders have high expectations of all pupils. They rise to this challenge and understand the importance of the 'Big Three: Be ready, be respectful, and be safe'. Pupils are clear about what bullying is, but are confident it does not happen. They say that adults would resolve any problems swiftly. Pupils show positive attitudes towards their learning. They are keen to gain new knowledge. Children in the early years quickly learn the expected routines. This helps them to make a confident and positive start to school life.

Pupils benefit from extensive outdoor space. This includes an adventure playground and an area for animal care, where pupils learn how to look after rabbits and chickens. When using these areas, pupils are respectful and patient to wait their turn. There is a calm environment. Pupils are friendly and courteous to each other and towards staff.

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

Leaders have created a rich and ambitious curriculum for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They give careful thought to the organisation of ages within classes, and this is reviewed regularly. Subject leaders have planned the exact knowledge that pupils need to learn. It is sequenced effectively, so that pupils develop their knowledge over time. Children in the early years enjoy a broad curriculum. The curriculum captures the interests of children and is underpinned by a clear purpose of what it is important for them to learn.

Pupils with SEND are well supported with their learning. Adults are skilful in ensuring they receive the same level of challenge, while scaffolding their learning when required. For example, some pupils have pre-teaching of a topic to develop their confidence, before being introduced to it in the classroom. Teachers assess the progress of all pupils regularly and make changes to what comes next as a result. This ensures that any gaps or misconceptions are addressed quickly.

Reading is an important part of the culture of the school. Pupils enjoy story time and understand how the chosen text links with their wider curriculum. For example, one class are enjoying 'Escape from Pompeii', which supports their study of the Romans in history. Most pupils say they also read for pleasure at home.

Pupils at the early stages of reading follow a set phonics programme. The progress of pupils is carefully tracked, so they receive the right level of support. The curriculum is planned so that pupils are supported to move to writing letters and then to full words. All staff receive appropriate training to deliver the programme. However, best practice is not always shared across classes to ensure consistency. This means that some pupils develop misconceptions or resort to guessing when they come across an unfamiliar word.

Pupils are proud to attend this school. They are enthusiastic about their learning. Low-level disruption is rare and not tolerated by staff. Pupils move around the school in a calm and purposeful way. Most pupils attend regularly and are punctual, but some do not attend as well as they could.

Pupils learn about fundamental British Values, such as democracy and mutual respect. They talk about why these are important in society. Pupils are confident to talk about tolerance and learn about different faiths and cultures. There are a range of extra-curricular clubs, such as woodland warriors, choir and animal care. The pupil parliament provides the chance to discuss and debate. Pupils and parents describe this as a highlight.

Since the previous inspection, a local governing body is now in place. It has a secure understanding of the strengths and future priorities of the school. The trust provides effective support to the governing body, while holding it and leaders accountable. Those responsible for governance take their responsibility for staff well-being seriously. Staff say they are well supported by leaders. They describe a 'genuine open-door policy' and feel that their opinions are valued. Staff engage positively with professional development opportunities provided by the school and trust. They say these are valuable.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There are strong relationships between staff and pupils. This allows any changes in a pupil's behaviour to be recognised quickly. Leaders then work with parents and outside agencies to secure further help and support where necessary.

There is a strong culture of vigilance. Staff understand that keeping children safe is a collective responsibility. All staff and governors receive regular safeguarding training. They are clear about how this helps to inform their work.

Pupils have an age-appropriate understanding of healthy relationships. They are very confident in their understanding of online safety. Pupils say they have a trusted adult they can speak to if they have any concerns.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- There are a small number of pupils who are persistently absent from school. This means they are missing vital parts of their education. Leaders should continue to work with families and external agencies to ensure rapid improvement in the attendance of such pupils.
- There are some inconsistencies in how pupils at the early stages of reading learn their phonic sounds and use these to read words accurately. This leads to some pupils developing misconceptions about how to say an individual sound or reverting to guessing when blending a word. Leaders should create opportunities for staff to share best practice in the delivery of phonics to ensure the quality is consistently high.

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.

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	140743
Local authority	Torbay
Inspection number	10231289
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	71
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Andy Nicholls
Headteacher	Hannah Maskell
Website	www.priory-primary.torbay.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	13 and 14 November 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has an executive headteacher and an executive deputy headteacher who work across two schools.
- Priory Primary is a Roman Catholic School. The last section 48 inspection took place in December 2021.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held discussions with the executive headteacher, the executive deputy headteacher, who is also the special educational needs coordinator, curriculum leaders, the early years leader, governors, support staff and the education and standards manager from the trust.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, maths and history. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, looked at curriculum planning, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also spoke with leaders about the curriculum in other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors scrutinised the single central record of adults working in the school. The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead to consider how well the school identifies pupils who are at risk and engages with external services. Inspectors also spoke with a range of pupils and staff about safeguarding.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's online survey for parents and carers, Parent View, including free-text comments. Inspectors also considered responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Kelly Olive, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Jen Southall

His Majesty's Inspector

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