

Inspection of The Priory Parish CofE Primary School

1 Aberdeen Street, Birkenhead, Merseyside CH41 4HS

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 February 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils, including children in early years, enjoy coming to this welcoming school. Staff and pupils strive to live out the agreed school values. One pupil reflected the thoughts of many, when they said, 'I always have a smile on my face when I have been in school.'

Pupils benefit from supportive relationships with staff. They feel confident to share any concerns that they have because they trust staff to help them. This makes pupils feel safe at school.

In lessons, and around the school, most pupils behave well. They are well-mannered and respectful towards each other and with staff. Leaders deal with incidents such as bullying effectively.

Leaders are aspirational for pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). However, there are some aspects of the curriculum that are not designed or delivered well enough. This means that pupils do not achieve as well as they should in a range of subjects.

Pupils enjoy the many leadership roles available to them. These include being librarians, being play leaders and being members of the ethos team and school council. They recognise the difference their work in these areas makes. For example, they are proud of the development of a school pond, which has been created to attract wildlife to the school grounds.

Pupils benefit from strong links with the local church and community. They take part in local litter picks and raise money for charities. They enjoy a range of trips and take part in clubs, such as art, music and yoga.

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

Leaders have ensured that the curriculum is broad and balanced. They have taken effective steps to improve pupils' learning in mathematics and English. Leaders have ensured that the curriculum for these subjects identifies the important knowledge that pupils should learn and when they will learn it. This means that pupils, including those with SEND, learn in a logical way, from the early years to Year 6. As a result, pupils build new knowledge on what they have learned before.

Leaders and teachers have a clear understanding of where pupils have gaps in their knowledge in reading and mathematics. They use this information to plan what pupils need to learn next.

In several subjects beyond English and mathematics, leaders' curriculum thinking is at an early stage. Leaders are not clear enough about what they want pupils, including children in early years, to learn. This prevents teachers from designing learning that helps pupils to build up their knowledge over time.

Leaders do not give clear enough guidance to staff in the early years about how to support children to extend their knowledge. As a result, children, including those in the provision for two-year-olds, do not build up their knowledge as well as they should. This means that some children are not well prepared for the next stage in their education.

Leaders have carefully designed the curriculum in phonics so that pupils, including those in the specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND (specially resourced provision), learn new sounds in a logical order. Staff select pupils' reading books to match the sounds that pupils learn in class. This helps pupils to develop their confidence and fluency in reading. Staff are well trained in their delivery of the phonics programme. Extra support is put in place quickly if pupils need to catch up. This support continues for older pupils for as long as it is needed. As a result, most pupils become fluent readers.

Children in the early years, including those in the provision for two-year-olds, listen to, and begin to recognise, sounds. They enjoy regular stories, songs and rhymes that help to develop their listening and attention skills. Pupils enjoy listening to and reading a wide range of high-quality texts. One child commented that they enjoyed reading as 'it helps me escape reality'.

Pupils with SEND are identified by staff at the earliest opportunity. They access the same curriculum as their peers. Leaders make sure that pupils in the specially resourced provision receive specialist support. Over time, many of these pupils successfully increase the time they spend with their peers in mainstream lessons.

Leaders have high expectations for pupils' behaviour. In most lessons, pupils' behaviour does not disturb learning. If pupils' behaviour falls short of leaders' expectations, staff help pupils to understand how they can make better choices in the future. Leaders have introduced a range of strategies to encourage pupils to attend school regularly. However, there are some pupils who are regularly absent from school.

Leaders support pupils to become active and responsible citizens who are keen to help others. Pupils develop an understanding of their own locality and the wider world. They develop respect for people's differences. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Leaders and governors prioritise the well-being of staff. Staff appreciate leaders' considerate approach. Members of the governing body understand the aspects of the school that require further development. They provide an appropriate level of challenge to leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make sure that staff attend regular safeguarding training to keep their knowledge up to date. Staff remain vigilant to any changes that could indicate that a pupil is at potential risk of harm. Staff act quickly to report any concerns that they have about a pupil's well-being or safety. Leaders use a range of resources, including external agencies, to provide help for pupils who need it. Leaders know the correct procedure to follow if any concerns about members of staff arise.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe and healthy. They understand how to protect themselves online. Older pupils also learn about issues in the local area and how to keep themselves safe out of school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a number of subjects, beyond English and mathematics, leaders have not identified the knowledge that pupils should learn and when this will be taught. This hinders teachers when designing learning for pupils that builds on what they already know. It also prevents pupils from achieving as well as they should. Leaders should ensure that there is greater clarity about what pupils will learn across the curriculum.
- The curriculum in the early years is not structured coherently or well designed. This means that staff are unclear about what children need to learn. It also means that staff do not effectively support or extend children's learning across all areas of learning. Leaders must ensure that the curriculum in the early years sets out the important knowledge and vocabulary that children need to know and remember in readiness for their future learning. In addition, leaders should ensure that staff in the early years are able to deliver the curriculum effectively.
- Persistent absence rates are high. Too many pupils do not attend school often enough. This limits how well these pupils learn. Leaders should take action to reduce levels of absence for all pupils.

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	105085
Local authority	Wirral
Inspection number	10242149
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	200
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Sheena Marriot and Deborah Wilkinson (Co-Chairs)
Headteacher	Greg Edwards
Website	www.prioryparishprimaryschool.com
Date of previous inspection	12 September 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The governing body is responsible for a breakfast and after-school club.
- The school hosts specially resourced provision, on behalf of the local authority, for ten pupils in the early years and key stage 1. These pupils have speech and language needs.
- There is provision for two-year-olds in the pre-school.
- The school is part of the Diocese of Chester. The last section 48 inspection took place on 30 June 2016.
- Leaders do not make use of alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- 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 conducted deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders and teachers. They visited lessons, looked at examples of pupils' and children's work and talked with groups of pupils about their learning. The lead inspector observed pupils from key stage 1 and key stage 2 read to a familiar adult. Inspectors also spoke with pupils about their learning and evaluated their work in some other subjects.
- Inspectors visited lessons in the specially resourced provision.
- Inspectors spoke with members of the governing body, the headteacher and other school leaders. The lead inspector also spoke with a representative of the local authority and a representative from the diocese.
- Inspectors talked with staff about their workload and well-being.
- Inspectors met with the leaders who are responsible for attendance, behaviour, early years, SEND and pupils' personal development.
- Inspectors reviewed leaders' policies and procedures to keep pupils safe. They discussed safeguarding arrangements with leaders and staff. Inspectors also checked the single central record.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils about safeguarding and their wider experience of school. Inspectors looked at a range of policies and documents related to pupils' and children's welfare and education. They observed pupils' and children's behaviour in lessons and around the school.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and pupils.
- Inspectors met with parents at the start of the school day and took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses.

Inspection team

Rebecca Jewitt, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Ian Cooper

Ofsted Inspector

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