

Inspection of Priory Park Infant School & Playgroup

Almond Road, St Neots, Cambridgeshire PE19 1DZ

Inspection dates: 16 and 17 May 2023

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 Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils think highly of their school. They never feel lonely. The school's values encourage tolerance and respect. Pupils live this out and are kind to each other. They are polite and listen to one another. Pupils understand that everyone is different and that everyone is valued. They understand that they can learn from their mistakes. Pupils follow school rules, behave well in lessons and enjoy spending time with each other as they learn how to be a good friend.

There are a range of clubs for pupils to enjoy. They also benefit from visitors, trips and forest school experiences as part of their curriculum offer. Pupils visit places in their local area, such as the library and the museum, and take part in a local music festival every year.

Pupils feel and are safe. Parents agree. Pupils know what bullying is, although it is rare in school. This is because adults talk to them about being kind. Teachers manage the few incidents which happen effectively, and pupils are confident that their worries will be dealt with when they talk to staff.

A nurturing learning environment supports pupils well and successfully prepares them for the next stages of the education.

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

Leaders understand how very young children learn and develop. Leaders have designed a curriculum which is well planned and considers pupils' next steps of learning in junior school.

Leaders in Playgroup and Reception provide an interesting curriculum. They plan a variety of activities for children to learn skills. Adults' skilful use of questioning helps to successfully develop children's ability to reason and understand what is being taught. Children listen well and follow simple instructions. The curriculum content prepares them for their learning in key stage 1.

Leaders' recent focus to improve early reading has made a positive difference. They have trained all staff appropriately and ensure that books are well matched to the sounds pupils know. Teachers introduce children to phonics in Playgroup. Children learn to hear sounds in words, and this prepares them well for learning in Reception. In older year groups, teachers know which pupils need more help with reading because they check this learning regularly. Pupils who struggle to learn to read are helped to catch up. By the time pupils leave Year 2, many are confident, accurate and fluent readers.

On occasions, pupils do not get the opportunity to revisit aspects of learning often enough. When this happens, pupils are not able to routinely recall what they have learned. In these cases, new learning does not build upon pupils' prior learning well

enough. Pupils confirm this, saying that they do not remember some things because it is a long time since they did the work.

Leaders are reviewing the curriculum and the processes for checking what pupils know and remember, taking into account how young some of the children are. This work is in its infancy and has not had time to impact across the whole curriculum. There are some instances where teachers are teaching new content before they know how much pupils already know from their previous learning.

Leaders accurately identify the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff have a secure understanding of how to adapt learning so that pupils can successfully access the curriculum, for example through providing one-to-one support, hands-on activities or quiet spaces so they can focus on areas they find more tricky.

Leaders promote opportunities within the curriculum and as part of their pastoral care for pupils' personal development. These include learning about different religions and opportunities to attend a range of clubs, such as drama. Pupils regularly take part in a 'big conversation' where they make suggestions and learn about the democratic process. They raise money for their chosen charities. Leaders have introduced homework in Year 2 to prepare pupils for their junior school.

Governors work strategically and hold leaders to account for the quality of provision at the school. They regularly visit the school to check planned improvements and to talk to pupils to check for themselves that the quality of education and other aspects of the school are improving.

Leaders support staff by considering their well-being and workload. Teachers who are new to the profession feel well supported by the training leaders provide. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the education and support their children receive.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders, including governors, are regularly trained and have a secure oversight of safeguarding. Staff receive regular training and updates. Leaders regularly check staff's understanding. Staff know how to report concerns and do so appropriately. Leaders provide support for families and pupils in need of help and make referrals to other agencies when necessary.

The curriculum content helps pupils to know how they can keep themselves safe, including when online. This is taught in an age-appropriate way that helps pupils to start to take responsibility for their own safety.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some areas of the curriculum, leaders have not planned sufficient opportunities for teachers to revisit and further develop important knowledge that pupils need. As a result, pupils do not routinely develop a depth of understanding of what they have learned. This means they are not as well prepared in some aspects of their learning. Leaders should review aspects of the curriculum to ensure that pupils regularly revisit areas needed to learn the intended curriculum from Playgroup to Year 2.
- In some areas of the curriculum, leaders are in the process of developing the assessment systems. Currently, staff are not always clear about what pupils must know, and they do not routinely check what pupils do understand and remember. Leaders should continue to establish what pupils should know and further develop systems to check what pupils have learned and remembered, so they are confident that pupils are achieving as well as they should in all areas of the curriculum.

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	110687
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10268590
Type of school	Nursery/Infant
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	2 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	258
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Charles Gladwin
Headteacher	Angela Smith
Website	www.priorypark.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	15 November 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has provision for two-year-olds.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspector(s) 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 met with representatives of the governing body, including the chair and vice-chair of governors, the local authority representative, the school's independent adviser, the headteacher, senior and middle leaders and a range of staff.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics, history, religious education and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors met with

subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, met with teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and considered pupils' work. An inspector also listened to a sample of pupils read to a familiar adult.

- The lead inspector considered information provided about safeguarding arrangements. Inspectors scrutinised safeguarding records and the single central record. Inspectors reviewed procedures by talking to leaders and staff and through discussions with pupils.
- The lead inspector took account of a wide range of documentary evidence, including the school's policies, self-evaluation, development plan, the 28 responses to Ofsted's online staff survey, the 65 responses to Ofsted Parent View, and local authority reports.

Inspection team

Linda Allison, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Ania Vaughan	Ofsted Inspector
Nathan Lowe	His Majesty's Inspector

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