

# Inspection of Priory School

Orchard Avenue, Slough, Berkshire SL1 6HE

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| Inspection dates:         | 12 and 13 November 2024 |
| The quality of education  | <b>Good</b>             |
| Behaviour and attitudes   | <b>Good</b>             |
| Personal development      | <b>Good</b>             |
| Leadership and management | <b>Good</b>             |
| Early years provision     | <b>Good</b>             |
| Previous inspection grade | Good                    |

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

Priory School is highly inclusive. Pupils feel nurtured and safe. A strong sense of community means that pupils trust adults to support them if they have a worry. 'Buddy' leaders help pupils make friends so they can join in with games at playtimes. Pupils of all ages play happily together, making the most of the outdoor spaces at breaktimes.

The school is ambitious to ensure pupils flourish. While pupils try their best, not all achieve as well as they could. Leaders know this and are swiftly making rapid improvements to what pupils now learn across the curriculum. The school provides effective education for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) who attend the Woodland and Orchard provision. Most staff are highly skilled in knowing how to meet the individual needs of pupils who access these provisions. They receive effective training to help them support pupils with complex needs.

Most pupils behave very well because staff have high expectations and use consistent routines and strategies. Pupils typically pay close attention to their teachers. They enjoy learning because teachers make lessons interesting. A sharp focus on communication ensures that pupils know how to interact with each other and share their ideas.

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

Before children join the school in Nursery and Reception, staff work closely with parents, carers and professionals to provide the support children need to learn well. Many children speak English as an additional language or have SEND. The school's early years curriculum develops pupils' communication and interaction skills well. Most children learn to read confidently. Staff receive regular training to ensure that they provide pupils with expert support. Children learn Makaton through singing and signing along with familiar songs and rhymes. This helps them communicate while they develop language skills.

The school is in the process of refining the curriculum to ensure that the important knowledge and skills that pupils need to learn have been identified and ordered. In most subjects, teachers typically ensure that pupils routinely remember and practise the most important knowledge and skills. In some subjects, particularly those in review, teaching is less precise. Teachers do not consistently check that all pupils have confidently grasped new ideas before moving on to new learning. This limits how well that pupils can apply their knowledge to new concepts.

A large, expert SEND team ensures that staff are aware of the strategies that pupils need to learn alongside their peers in mainstream lessons. Not all staff use this information to adapt learning to make sure lessons are fully accessible to pupils with SEND. This means some pupils with SEND struggle to learn as well as they should. The school is in the process of providing further training to address this issue.

A number of pupils with education, health and care (EHC) plans receive their education in the Orchard and Woodland classes. Many of these pupils have complex learning needs and require a high level of support. Teachers quickly learn the preferred ways that pupils

use to communicate. They use a range of communication tools such as symbols and visual aids to help pupils participate fully in learning. Teachers develop ambitious learning goals that help pupils work towards the aims in their EHC plans. Pupils learn to pay attention and listen to instruction. This enables them to sustain focus so they can learn well. Pupils are very settled. They receive support that helps them to achieve their potential.

Staff help pupils recognise and manage their feelings. They praise pupils for trying their best, showing them the upmost kindness and care. Pupils follow the clear routines because staff are consistent in their high expectations. Bullying is very rare as staff help pupils understand the impact of unkind behaviour. The school works closely with families and professionals to help pupils overcome barriers to regular attendance. An increasing number of pupils are now attending school with greater regularity.

The school utilises the rich cultural tapestry of its pupils. Pupils learn first hand from their peers about different cultures and faiths through events such as World Religion Day. The school encourages pupils to be proud of who they are. Pupils share their own traditions, such as performing traditional dances during Diwali, and colour run for Holi. Pupils learn to make a positive contribution to school life. The school council and house captains ensure that pupils' views are expressed and acted upon by staff.

The school has undergone a number of changes since the last inspection. Staff have been well supported throughout, and speak highly of the positive and open culture in school. Staff receive regular training to develop their expertise so they can meet the needs of pupils. Governors know the school priorities well. They provide effective support and challenge to ensure decisions are always made in the very best interest of pupils.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

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

- Teachers do not always check how well that pupils understand concepts before moving on to new ideas. This means that some teachers do not adapt learning to address gaps in pupils' understanding. The school must ensure that all staff have the expertise that they need to routinely identify and close gaps in learning, so pupils know and remember more over time.
- Sometimes, teachers do not always make appropriate adjustments that enable pupils with SEND to access learning in mainstream provision. This means some pupils with SEND do not learn as well as they could. The school must ensure that staff have the training they need so they know how to implement strategies in the classroom that help pupils with SEND achieve well.

## 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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

## School details

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| <b>Unique reference number</b>             | 110089   |
| <b>Local authority</b>                     | Slough   |
| <b>Inspection number</b>                   | 10341264   |
| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Primary  |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Foundation   |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 3 to 11  |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed  |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 580  |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body   |
| <b>Chair of governing body</b>             | Caroline Masih   |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Hannah Foster  |
| <b>Website</b>                             | <a href="http://www.prioryschool.com">www.prioryschool.com</a> |
| <b>Date of previous inspection</b>         | 12 March 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005       |

## Information about this school

- Since the last inspection, there have been significant changes in leadership and governance. The headteacher and majority of the senior leadership team were recruited in September 2021. A significant majority of the governors were also recruited at the same time.
- The school has two specialist resource provisions for pupils with an EHC plan. The Orchard provides education for 38 pupils with complex SEND. Woodland provides integrated mainstream education for 26 pupils with SEND.
- The school does not make use of any provider of alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school’s education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders, staff and pupils. The lead inspector also met with the representatives from the board of governors, including the chair of governors. The lead inspector also had a telephone call with a representative of Slough local authority.
- The inspection team carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, science, computing, music and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, 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.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire, including the free-text comments. They also took account of the responses to the confidential staff survey and gathered the views of both staff and pupils throughout the inspection.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils’ interests first.
- Inspectors reviewed and scrutinised a range of the school’s documentation, including leaders’ plans for improving the school, minutes of governor meetings and records of attendance and behaviour incidents.

## **Inspection team**

|                                |                         |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Michelle Payne, lead inspector | His Majesty’s Inspector |
| Michael Eggleton               | Ofsted Inspector        |
| James Lovell                   | Ofsted Inspector        |
| Deirdre Crutchley              | Ofsted Inspector        |

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