

Inspection of The Priory Parish CofE Primary School

The Priory Parish C of E Primary School, 1 Aberdeen Street, Birkenhead, Merseyside CH41 4HS

Inspection dates:	11 and 12 February 2025
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?

Pupils enjoy learning and playing in this happy and nurturing school. They are caring towards each other. They show maturity when putting themselves in the shoes of those who they consider less fortunate than themselves.

Pupils rise to staff's high expectations of their behaviour and learning. They appreciate the effectiveness and simplicity of the school's recently changed behaviour rules. They learn how to manage their emotions. Pupils understand that some of their peers need more help than others in doing this.

From the early years, children learn to listen carefully to staff, share ideas with classmates and move sensibly between activities. As they move up the school, pupils build on these foundations to develop positive behaviour for learning. They work hard and most achieve well in most subjects.

Pupils enjoy learning about people who are different from themselves, such as in faith and type of family. They are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Pupils benefit from cultural activities, such as visits to museums. They learn to appreciate and protect nature in the school's woodland area. They relish visiting local areas of natural beauty. They take their roles of responsibility seriously, including being members of the school council.

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

Since the previous inspection, the school has made changes which have significantly improved the curriculum, including in the early years. The curriculum is ambitious and flows from the provision for two-year-olds to the end of Year 6. At the end of the Reception Year, and each subsequent key stage, the revised curriculum prepares pupils well for the next steps in their education.

For the most part, the school ensures that teachers know what to teach and in which order. This ensures that, generally, pupils' learning successfully builds on what they already know. However, sometimes, links with prior learning are less clearly identified. Where this is the case, teachers do not ensure that pupils relate what they already know to what they have learned in the past. At times, in some subjects, pupils learn specific facts successfully but struggle to deepen their learning by making connections.

Staff have a strong knowledge of the subjects that they teach. They use this to devise appropriate learning activities. Staff in the early years understand how young children learn. They develop children's skills successfully over time, particularly in listening and speaking. Across the school, staff check how well pupils have learned and remembered over time. They ensure that future teaching addresses gaps in knowledge and understanding.

The school identifies the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff provide these pupils with the help that they need to follow the whole curriculum successfully, alongside their classmates.

The reading curriculum is well designed and staff are skilled in teaching it. Children in the Nursery begin their reading journey by learning to enjoy songs, stories and rhymes. Those who teach reading make sure that pupils who struggle have the help that they need to keep up with the reading curriculum. Typically, pupils are fluent and accurate readers by the end of Year 1. The school successfully encourages pupils to read widely for pleasure.

Lessons and social times are orderly. In the early years, children quickly learn to enjoy regular routines, follow instructions and share resources. While most pupils focus well on learning, a small number need help to manage their emotions and maintain concentration. Skilled staff give these pupils the support that they need to enjoy working purposefully.

The school has worked hard with pupils, families and external agencies to address absence. As a consequence, over time, attendance levels have increased. However, too many pupils miss essential learning and opportunities for personal development because they do not attend school regularly enough. These pupils do not achieve as well as they should.

The school provides pupils with many opportunities to develop personally. Staff organise a range of well-attended activities after school, including multi-sports and learning to play musical instruments. Pupils take on responsibilities such as being play leaders and eco-councillors. They celebrate difference including in culture and religion.

Experienced governors have expertly steered the school through a period of turbulence. The decisions made by the governing body have ensured much-needed stability in leadership and improvement in the quality of education. The school has made sure that staff know that their hard work and experience are valued and their workload considered. The school works well with parents and carers to involve them in their children's education.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's substantial work to improve attendance has had varied success. Too many pupils are too often absent from school. These pupils miss essential learning and do not achieve as well as they could. The school should build on current work

with pupils and their families to improve attendance so that pupils reach their full academic potential.

- In a small number of subjects, the school has not identified the key knowledge it wants pupils to learn explicitly. This means that, at times, pupils' knowledge lacks depth and they struggle to make connections with previous learning. The school should ensure that it identifies the key knowledge it wants pupils to know in all subjects, so that teachers can develop pupils' knowledge sufficiently and consistently.

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

Unique reference number	105085
Local authority	Wirral
Inspection number	10377901
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	181
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Deborah Wilkinson
Headteacher	Sophie Ellison
Website	www.prioryparishprimaryschool.com
Dates of previous inspection	8 and 9 February 2023, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The Priory Parish CofE Primary School is a Church of England voluntary-aided school in the Diocese of Chester. The most recent section 48 inspection of the school was in March 2024. The next Section 48 inspection is due by 2030.
- An acting headteacher and an acting deputy headteacher took up their temporary roles in May 2024. Both were already members of staff at the school.
- The school uses one unregistered alternative provider.
- The governing body runs before- and after-school provision on the school site.

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 of the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also reviewed the curriculum and pupils' work in some other subjects.
- Inspectors held discussions with the acting headteacher and acting deputy headteacher, other leaders and staff.
- The lead inspector held discussions with governors, including the chair. She had a discussion with a representative of the local authority and a representative of the Diocese of Chester.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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 of safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors spoke with parents at the start of the school day. They also considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They reviewed staff and pupil responses to Ofsted's online surveys.

Inspection team

Liz Kelly, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

David Lobodzinski

His Majesty's Inspector

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