

INSPECTION REPORT

PRIOR HEATH INFANT SCHOOL

Camberley, Surrey

LEA area: Surrey

Unique reference number: 125028

Headteacher: Mrs Heather Allan

Reporting inspector: Mr Douglas Hayward
21234

Dates of inspection: 5th – 6th March 2001

Inspection number: 195568

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Prior Road Camberley Surrey
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Howard Mason
Date of previous inspection:	March 1997

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Prior Heath is a small infant school situated on the outskirts of Camberley. Built originally in 1967 as a primary school, Prior Heath later became a first school, and then an infant school for pupils from 4 to 7 years of age in 1994 when the local authority reorganised its primary schools. Many of the pupils come from families with managerial backgrounds. The pupils come to school from a wide area and they nearly all travel to school by car. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals (1.7 per cent) is well below the national average. The percentage of pupils speaking English as an additional language (2.5 per cent) is higher than in many schools. Most of them have parents who have located to managerial posts in nearby information technology companies for a fixed period. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs (6 per cent) is well below the national average and there are no pupils with statements of special educational need.

Currently there are 176 pupils on roll. Children start in one of the two reception classes at the beginning of the year in which they have their fifth birthday. They attend on a part-time basis until the term in which they have their fifth birthday, when they attend full-time. There is a wide range of attainment when children start school, but the attainment of the majority of pupils is above the Surrey average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Prior Heath is a very good school with many significant strengths. It makes the most of pupils' talents and abilities and ensures that they make very good progress.

The school has obtained results in reading, writing and mathematics in national tests for pupils at the age of seven that have been consistently very high for the last four years. Results in reading and mathematics place Prior Heath in the top 5 per cent of schools nationally. The school has recently received an 'Excellence Award' from the Department for Education for its results in national tests. It provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards are high in national tests in reading, writing and mathematics at the age of seven. The school uses lots of different information very well to plan work for pupils of all ages and abilities so that they make very good progress.
- It provides very good standards of teaching. Teachers are very hard working and enthusiastic. They have high expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- The school provides a stimulating atmosphere in which pupils can learn. There are lots of colourful displays that are lovely to look at and show the high standards that pupils achieve in a wide range of subjects.
- The school helps pupils to develop very good relationships with adults and other pupils. Their behaviour is very good. They care very much about each other and their school.
- The headteacher provides very good leadership and is very well supported by staff and governors.

What could be improved

- More planned opportunities for pupils to take additional responsibility and to become more independent.
- The consistency of teachers' marking.
- More visitors to the school to enrich the curriculum.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in March 1997, when it was judged to provide sound value for money. Many aspects of the school's work have improved since then. The school has also succeeded in maintaining the high standards that were observed in the previous inspection. For example, standards of attainment for pupils of all ages remain very high. Pupils' behaviour in the previous inspection was judged to be very good and remains so. Teaching is much better than in the last inspection. In 1997, just under a quarter of teaching was judged to be very good. In the current inspection, two-thirds of lessons were very good and, occasionally, excellent. The monitoring of teaching has improved significantly since the previous inspection. The school has managed to retain a broad and balanced curriculum, despite the pressures of national initiatives. There are still very good links with parents and they play a positive part in

the running of the school. The quality of leadership from the headteacher is very good and has a major impact on the high standards achieved. The governing body continues to provide very good support. The school now provides very good value for money, which is a significant improvement since the last inspection. The school is very well placed to maintain high standards.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 7-year-olds based on National Curriculum test results.

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
Reading	A*	A*	A*	A	very high A*
Writing	A	A	A	A	well above average A
Mathematics	A	A*	A*	A	above average B
					average C
					below average D
					well below average E

The school has succeeded in maintaining pupils' outstanding levels of achievement in national tests at the age of seven over several years. Pupils' results in reading and mathematics place Prior Heath in the top 5 per cent of schools in England. The percentage of pupils achieving the higher Level 3 in last year's end of Key Stage 1 tests was above average in writing, well above average in mathematics and very high in reading. During the inspection it was judged that pupils' attainment in English, mathematics and science was well above average. The school continues to set challenging targets for future years.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils obviously enjoy their lessons. They concentrate very well, listen very carefully, share ideas and work very hard.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good overall, with many examples of excellent behaviour in lessons, at lunchtime, at playtime and in assemblies.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils work very well together and show great respect for each other and for their teachers. There are not enough opportunities to take responsibility and to develop independence.
Attendance	Good. It is better than the national average for primary schools. Pupils arrive punctually.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years
Lessons seen overall	Very good	Very good

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

During the inspection 16 lessons were observed. Teaching is never less than good and in almost two out of every three lessons it is very good and, occasionally, excellent. This is very high quality teaching and it is found throughout the school. Teachers are very hard working and work well as a team. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is good and teachers plan and teach a wide range of interesting subjects. Their planning is often excellent. Teachers have very high expectations of what pupils can achieve. They are very good at using questions to find out how much pupils know. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs in classes and in small groups is very good and helps them to make good progress.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. The school rightly places great importance on developing pupils' skills in reading, writing and mathematics. It also teaches a wide range of other subjects, such as design and technology, art and music. Computers are used very well to support learning in other subjects. The school does not provide enough opportunities to invite visitors into school to make subjects even more interesting.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Work is carefully planned for the few pupils with special educational needs. They receive very good support in classes and in small groups when they work together.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. Pupils often start at Prior Heath speaking little or no English. They receive good support and make rapid progress in speaking and writing in English.
Provision for pupils' development, including their personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Pupils know the difference between right and wrong. They devise their own classroom rules and are becoming increasingly aware of other cultures in society. Assemblies provide good opportunities for spiritual development. Very good story telling captures pupils' attention and their imagination is fired by many different experiences in class.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very well. Pupils are looked after in a caring, safe environment. The school works closely with parents.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher provides clear educational direction for the work of the school and this has had a significant impact on the high standards and very good progress that pupils make. The deputy headteacher and staff provide very good support. Subject co-ordinators work very hard to monitor standards in their subjects.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are very knowledgeable, hard working and enthusiastic. They are very involved in the running of the school and provide very good support.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school is well aware that many pupils start in the reception classes with above-average attainment. It makes sure that it sets high targets to capitalise on pupils' talents, interests and abilities in order for them to make very good progress.
The strategic use of resources	The school uses its budget and resources very well to provide a high quality education.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

One hundred and one parents (57 per cent) returned their questionnaires and 23 parents attended the pre-inspection meeting.

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• They say their children enjoy school• They feel that pupils' behaviour in school is good• They think that the teaching is good• They say that the school has high expectations of their children• They feel that the school is well managed and led• They say the school helps their children to become mature and responsible	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Some think that the school does not set the right amount of homework• A number of parents feel that the school does not work closely enough with them• A significant number feel that the school does not provide a wide range of activities outside lessons.

The inspection team agrees with parents' positive comments. There was some disagreement amongst parents about whether the school sets too much or too little homework. The inspection team feels the amount is appropriate and that it supports the work that pupils do in school. The school offers opportunities for parents to become involved in the life and work of the school and keeps them very well informed. Parents at the meeting commented that they were always able to see teachers at short notice if they had any concerns. There are several fee-paying after-school clubs. Additionally, the school organises a wide range of visits to places of interest, such as Marwell Zoo and Arundel Castle.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Standards are high in national tests in reading, writing and mathematics at the age of seven. The school uses lots of different information very well to plan work for pupils of all ages and abilities so that they make very good progress.

1. The results of last year's national tests and assessments for seven-year-old pupils in reading, writing, mathematics and science followed a very similar pattern to the previous three years. Pupils' results in reading, mathematics and science were very high compared with those in all schools nationally and placed Prior Heath in the top 5 per cent of schools in England. Pupils' results in writing were well above the average for all schools. Compared with those in similar schools, results at Prior Heath were well above average. The percentage of pupils reaching Level 3¹ was very high in reading and mathematics, and well above average in writing and science. The school's results compared with all schools nationally have been remarkably good since 1997. Additionally, the percentage of pupils attaining above average levels has gradually increased in all subjects. In the 2000 tests, two pupils achieved the exceptional standard of Level 4 in reading and one pupil attained that level in mathematics.
2. Children's attainment when they start school is above average. In fact, early assessments show that attainment for pupils at Prior Heath places it in the top 10 per cent of schools in Surrey. Prior Heath is a school that recognises that many of its pupils start school with significant advantages compared with those in lots of other schools; for instance, they have a wide vocabulary and a good deal of experience of books. Nevertheless, this is not a complacent school that relies on what children know when they start school to *'carry them through'*. It sets out to make the most of pupils' interests, talents and abilities. In order to avoid the charge that its outstanding results at the age of seven are *'easy'* for this school because of the pupils' knowledge, it uses assessment information increasingly effectively to show what difference the school makes. Many schools now refer to this eventual progress, in relation to what they could do when they started school, as *'value added'*. It indicates how influential the school has been in furthering the pupils' progress. There is very good evidence that work at Prior Heath builds quickly, logically and progressively from year to year on what pupils know and can do. It has started to use individual targeting from the time children start school to ensure that their rate of progress is maintained throughout the Foundation Stage² and Key Stage 1.
3. Pupils have very good speaking and listening skills. They listen very attentively in lessons and assemblies to other pupils and adults speaking. They speak very clearly and confidently. Pupils develop an extensive vocabulary that they use very well in class discussions and that is extended by their very good use of specific subject vocabulary. For example, in the reception class a child was asked how he thought the *Three Bears* would react to *Goldilocks* eating their porridge. He replied, *'I think they would have been furious!* Another child, when asked what a postcode on a letter indicated replied, *'A postcode helps the postman to deliver the letter'*. In a good mathematics lesson, a pupil in Year 1 referred to the need to *'collate'* the information they have collected to draw a *'pictogram'*. In Year 2, pupils referred to the *'friction'* caused by the *'tread'* on the tyres of model cars. One pupil used adjectives to describe a fur hat as *'a soft, black, hat with smooth ears'*. In a good music lesson, in response to the teacher's suggestion to put silences between rhythms a pupil asked, *'Is that a pattern?'* There is no doubt that many

¹ Levels – by the end of Key Stage 1 pupils are expected to attain Level 2 in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Those who attain Level 3 are, therefore, attaining above nationally expected levels.

² The Foundation Stage – This was introduced in September 2000 and forms a separate stage of education for children from the age of three until they reach the end of the reception year.

children starting school owe their extensive vocabulary to their home background. There is also no doubt that the development of that vocabulary throughout the school is due in no small part to the many challenging opportunities the school provides to use and extend their range of language and an insistence from the teachers that they use appropriate terminology in lessons.

4. Pupils read an increasingly difficult range of texts confidently and expressively. They refer to favourite authors, such as *Bel Mooney*, *Dick King Smith* and, inevitably, *J.K. Rowling*. They do not feel that they are too young to read and understand the '*Harry Potter*' books. The importance of the written word is clearly emphasised in displays throughout the school. Many pupils are members of the public library and use non-fiction books to find information; for example, about different forms of transport for their forthcoming visit to the *Brooklands Museum*. They know how to use an alphabetical index to find information in an encyclopaedia and one pupil in Year 1 knew that, '*Bees have little buckets at the end of their legs to collect pollen in*'. They can use contents and index pages to find information in books and yet they have very few opportunities to develop library retrieval skills. Books on specific topics are found for them and placed in classrooms so that they do not have opportunities to develop their independence by going to a central area to search for them using the Dewey or a colour-coded system.
5. Pupils make very good progress in writing throughout the school. The school has achieved results that are well above the national average since 1997. It has gradually increased the percentage of pupils achieving Level 3 so that in 2000 that percentage (18 per cent) was also well above the national average (9 per cent). It is acknowledged nationally that it is difficult for Key Stage 1 pupils to achieve Level 3 in writing, but the school has carefully targeted this area as one that needed improvement and it has been successful. Both boys and girls have exceeded the national average for their age group in writing for the last three years. The school uses a system of targets for individual pupils to help improve different aspects of their writing, such as the use of capital letters or the use of vocabulary to make the content more interesting. For example, one teacher wrote about a pupil's story, '*A good description. You have thought of lots of information to tell me. Please think about starting your sentences using more interesting words. Remember your target.*' Targets are written on cards and inserted into pupils' books. They know that if a particular target is signed three times by the teacher they have succeeded in meeting it and can move on to another target.
6. Having specific points for improvement in mind means that pupils find that the writing task has more purpose. It certainly leads to rapid progress for pupils throughout the school. For example, a short time after starting school a child in the reception class wrote as her first piece of independent writing, '*I like is crm*'. Within a few months she was able to write, '*I got a dorphin brush from Santa. I went to my Nanny and grada*'. Within another two months she could write extended sentences without help about the Chinese New Year. '*In China the piople dres up as a dragon. In China the dragon fitn away all the bad spiris*'. Pupils develop a very good cursive writing style in a very short time. They become increasingly aware of the importance of developing precise written language, such as adjectives and connectives and use them very well in their stories and poems. By the time pupils are in Year 2 they can write descriptions to accompany the title of, '*Guess who I saw in the woods today?* For example, '*I saw a tree man. He had grey clothes and was as long as the tallest tree in the world. He was also very clever, but very, very, very nasty*', and, '*It was a hairy green monster and its eyes were yellow and stared at me. It had lots of feet and moved very quickly indeed*'. They use the word-

processor to increase the effect and impact of a piece of descriptive writing about *Bonfire Night*. For example,

Zoom!

I fly high up in the sky

And turn into different colours.

I explode into a diamond and

burst in the darkness.

I sparkle up so high

And

I

Fall

Back

Onto

The

Ground

They also show a very creative approach to describing ‘everyday’ occurrences in written forms that demand a degree of maturity and humour. For example,

When I lie in bed

I think I can see

a ghost leaning against my door!

Phew – it’s only my dressing gown.

When I lie in bed

I think I can hear

ghosts whispering.

Oh, it’s only the wind.

When I lie in bed

I think I can see

aliens in the sky flashing lights at me.

A really big phew – it’s only the stars.

7. The school has become increasingly skilled at analysing data from tests and assessments to predict the levels that pupils can achieve in national tests at the end of Key Stage 1, and to target improvement in areas where additional focus is needed. For example, an analysis of test papers in 2000 indicated groups of words and sounds that pupils were finding difficult to spell. The school identified the need for pupils to improve sentence construction and use punctuation consistently in written work. In reading comprehension, it identified the need to explain, compare and summarise inference in text and to speed up the *skimming* and *scanning* techniques of higher-attaining pupils. These analyses enabled the school to modify its planning so that additional emphasis was given to these targeted areas. Very useful analyses carried out by the local education authority each year show the degree of progress that each year group of pupils have made in subjects, such as spelling, reading, mathematics and science, based on assessment information on the pupils when they started school over two years earlier. The information is entered onto individual ‘*tracking sheets*’ which identify areas for focus in teaching; for example, times tables in mathematics. These tracking sheets are completed regularly and form the basis of the discussion between parents and teachers at the termly consultation evenings. The local authority analysis also identifies any differences in performance between boys and girls; for example, there is no significant difference at Level 2, but girls do slightly better at Level 3 in writing and boys’ results are slightly higher at Level 3 in mathematics.

8. The school also uses test and data analysis to identify pupils with special educational needs, those with English as an additional language and those who are identified as being talented or gifted. Pupils with special educational needs are identified early and receive good support in classes and in small withdrawal groups. Literacy and numeracy activities are carefully planned for them in lessons. In small groups, their work follows a very similar pattern to that of their peers in classes. Teaching is very good and planning is carefully adapted to their particular needs and abilities. For example, in a literacy lesson pupils were able to use a limited number of alliterative words they had discussed together when they wrote their individual sentences about animals. Their good level of understanding of the impact of alliteration was clearly indicated when one wrote, '**Fierce fish bite fingers!**' Pupils with English as an additional language make good, and sometimes very good, progress. The majority of these pupils speak Finnish as their first language and often arrive speaking no, or very little, English at all. They are well supported in school and by a visiting specialist teacher. They quickly learn and apply English and soon make the same progress as their English peers.

It provides very good standards of teaching. Teachers are very hard working and enthusiastic. They have high expectations of what pupils can achieve.

9. Teaching was at least good in all the lessons observed. It was very good in almost two out of every three lessons and excellent in one lesson. This is very high quality teaching and it is found throughout the school. Lessons throughout the school capture pupils' attention and it is clear why they enjoy coming to school. Ninety-five per cent of parents in their questionnaires thought that teaching was good. Teachers are very hard working and are committed to the success of the school. They work well as a team and offer good support to each other.
10. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. In 1997, teaching was judged to be good or better in 69 per cent of lessons compared with 100 per cent in this inspection. In 1997, only 22 per cent of teaching was judged to be very good, compared with 62 per cent in the current inspection. Many of the strengths identified in teaching in that inspection are still apparent, even though there has been a considerable turnover in personnel. For example, teachers are still caring and committed, and work hard. Planning remains a strength of teaching, as well as a variety of stimulating tasks to interest and motivate pupils. Teachers are still very good at assessing pupils' work to find out how much they know and to plan work accordingly.
11. One of the reasons for the improvement in the quality of teaching is the implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. They have enabled teachers to focus precisely on particular skills in literacy and numeracy that have to be taught in a logical sequence. Teaching in literacy and numeracy throughout the school was at least good, and sometimes very good. There are several reasons for good and very good teaching that are common to a range of different subjects. A major factor behind the best teaching is the way in which teachers have high expectations of their pupils. They are very good at making the most of pupils' existing talents and ensure that the work challenges them to use their talents and to increase their knowledge and understanding.
12. Another reason is the planning process, also identified in the previous inspection report. The quality of teachers' planning is very good, and occasionally excellent. Teachers plan carefully to ensure that their lessons are well matched to pupils' abilities. Work is purposeful and challenging and keeps them fully occupied. Teachers ensure that a very good range of resources are available for practical activities, that the lesson builds well on what they already know and that it gives them subject knowledge they did not have before. Teachers' lesson plans also include a section for evaluating the success of the activity; for example, *Did the pupils understand what was intended? Did they understand*

the instructions? How independent were they? The final section of teachers' lesson plans offers an opportunity to suggest some possibilities for follow-up or revision activities in future lessons; for example, in a follow-up mathematics lesson on data handling, the teacher asked whether pupils would need more experience of similar or different activities. Another teacher suggested that children in the reception class needed to look more closely at the impact of 'warm' and 'cold' colours as a follow up to their work on the paintings of Mondrian. Teachers' plans are so thorough and comprehensive that it would be quite feasible for another teacher to successfully use those plans to take over the lesson at short notice.

13. Another very successful feature of teaching is the way in which teachers share with pupils what they expect them to learn by the end of the lesson. This *'intended learning outcome'* is usually written in one or two sentences on the board. In the very best lessons, it is referred to during the course of the lesson and in very good plenary sessions at the end of lessons. It helps pupils to focus on the main elements of the lesson and helps teachers to find out whether pupils have learned what was planned at the beginning of the lesson.
14. In order to find out, teachers use very good questioning. Lessons invariably start with a brisk question and answer session in which teachers ask searching questions to find out what pupils know. For example, in a good numeracy lesson the teacher posed rapid questions during the mental arithmetic introduction to develop pupils' speed and accuracy in working things out in their heads; for example, *'Start at 73 and add on 30. Where am I? What is the zero in 103 doing? If it wasn't there what would the number be?'* In a very good literacy lesson, the teacher's questions prompted the pupils to imagine themselves as the writer of poems which exemplify feelings and fears; for example, *'What does the poet imagine he can hear? What does he do to imagine all these things?'*
15. Questioning during the course of the lesson maintains the pace of the lesson and allows the teacher to check whether pupils understand what is going on. Pupils' responses will determine whether the teacher moves on to a new idea or whether revision is necessary. For example, in a reception class a teacher asked, *'Why has the word Goldilocks got a capital letter?'* In a Year 1 mathematics lesson, the teacher wanted to know, *'What is the most / least popular colour? How many more pupils preferred green than brown? How many children were in Oak class when Mrs Jones made this graph?'* Finally, questioning at the end of the lesson allows time to recap the main focus of the lesson. In the best lessons, pupils themselves play an active role in the *plenary* session. Groups have the opportunity to tell the other pupils what they have been doing during the lesson. During the plenary teachers often pose questions for pupils to answer as a means of assessing how successfully they have understood what they have been doing.

The school provides a stimulating atmosphere in which pupils can learn. There are lots of colourful displays that are lovely to look at and show the high standards that pupils achieve in a wide range of subjects.

16. At the pre-inspection meeting, and in written comments in their returned questionnaires, some parents expressed concern that the current emphasis that the school was required to place on literacy and numeracy might mean that their children had fewer opportunities to study other subjects. While Prior Heath quite correctly emphasises the importance of literacy and numeracy it is clear from looking at displays around the school that parents' concerns are not justified. Classrooms and corridors have stimulating displays reflecting the wide range of the curriculum and the care and pride with which teachers display pupils' work. Displays are bright and attractive and draw visitors to them. They are a mixture of written and art work and pupils really enjoy talking about the range of work on display.

17. Displays reflect the class topics that are planned, as well as current events. For example, children in the reception classes have been learning about the recent *Chinese New Year* celebrations. Colourful and appealing arrangements of Chinese artefacts successfully complemented the information supplied by a Chinese visitor. Children were delighted to talk about the items on display and keen to show their expertise with chopsticks! Children in the reception classes have also produced individual and group artwork to accompany the story of *Penguin Small* by Mick Inkpen. As with many other displays, there are very good links between subjects. In this display, beautiful pastel and paint pictures of penguins accompany written descriptions, such as, '*Penguin Small is furry. He can glide with his flippers*'.
18. Very good links between information and communication technology (ICT) and other subjects, such as English, mathematics, science, history and geography, are apparent in many displays. Pupils in Year 1 selected labels from a science program to label parts of the human body, such as '*shoulders*' and '*right leg*'. They used a drawing program very well to draw pictures of vehicles belonging to '*people who help us*' and word-processed their explanations; for example, '*The AA man helps you when you get your keys stuck in the car*'. They made prints of plants using a variety of art techniques and compared these with drawings they made on the computer. They found that it was more difficult to draw the plants using a mouse and computer, but it was easier to make lots of copies of the same quality. Children in the reception class used the mouse confidently to draw rectangles and squares in the style of Mondrian's paintings, whilst pupils in Year 2 use a data-handling program to display the information they collected in a mathematics lesson about eye colour and class pets.
19. Pupils' have many opportunities to develop their practical skills in a range of art, design and technology activities. Children in the reception classes combine different art techniques, such as sponge printing, when they make their '*moving pictures*' using a simple lever mechanism. Pupils in the reception class design a '*bed for a Ted*', complete with covers and pillows. In Year 1, pupils design and make '*playground equipment*' for their ideal playgrounds. Their written evaluations of their success range from, '*I needed to change my ideas*,' to '*It worked!*' Visits to places of interest outside school are an important part of the school's work as are opportunities for pupils to have '*hands on*' experience. The school recognises that '*taking learning out of the classroom*' can support many areas of the curriculum. For example, a visit to *Brooklands Museum* promotes work in science, design and technology, non-fiction writing and history. Displays of pupils writing about different types of light are the result of a visit by a speaker from a nearby museum. Pupils have written their own very good '*information labels*' in the style of museum exhibit labels about beeswax candles, rushlights and lanterns.

The school helps pupils to develop very good relationships with adults and other pupils. Their behaviour is very good. They care very much each about each other and their school.

20. Almost all parents think that the school helps pupils to become mature and responsible. Pupils talk enthusiastically about their school and their work. Their willingness to listen carefully to what they have to do, to start work promptly and to concentrate and work hard means that no time is wasted in lessons. Pupils have a real desire to do their best that starts with the youngest children and works its way through the whole school. Wherever pupils work, they work well together. They bring positive and conscientious attitudes to their work and carry out their tasks sensibly, thoughtfully and safely. The school firmly believes that supporting pupils' spiritual development contributes to positive attitudes and values through reflection. During assemblies this was borne out by a clear sense of

spirituality, pupils' total involvement and a real sense of *'awe and wonder'*, for example, when pupils heard the story of *The Ugly Duckling*.

21. The school places considerable importance on pupils' personal development. Almost all parents think that behaviour in school is good and this was borne out by observations during the inspection. Pupils' behaviour was exemplary in assemblies, where they listened intently to what was said and to the music that was played as they entered and left the hall. Their behaviour at lunchtime in the dining room was very good and they enjoy the social occasion. School rules are prominently displayed and pupils are well aware of them. They know that they are expected to respond appropriately to adults and to other pupils. They are expected to be helpful to others and not critical or hurtful. A very good example of how one child felt that she could support others was heard in assembly. The central character in assembly, a puppet called *'Digby Duck'*, was very unhappy because he felt he could not do anything and did not have fingers to count to ten. Without prompting one child immediately said, *'I can help Digby. I can teach him how to count to ten.'*

The headteacher provides very good leadership and is very well supported by staff and governors.

21. In their pre-inspection questionnaires, almost all parents agreed that the school is well managed and led. The previous report noted that the headteacher provided clear leadership and a thorough understanding of the future direction for the school. This judgement still applies. Her determination to maintain the very high standards that pupils achieve at Prior Heath and to increase the number of pupils achieving above average results has paid off, but not at the expense of a reduced curriculum or lower standards of behaviour. She receives strong support from the deputy headteacher and all staff. Most parents believe that the school works closely with them and that the school listens to them. All the key issues from the last report have been successfully addressed, with the exception of applying the marking policy consistently. Despite the fact that many of the staff have been appointed since the last inspection the headteacher has ensured that the quality of these teachers has remained high.
22. The previous report also noted the strong support from the school's governing body and this judgement remains true. Governors are knowledgeable, enthusiastic and frequently involved in the day-to-day running of the school. The headteacher and chair of governors meet regularly and several governors help in classes on a voluntary basis. Governors make good use of their expertise and experience in areas such as management and finance to make a significant and valued contribution to the work of the school. A key issue from the previous inspection was for the headteacher and subject co-ordinators to monitor teaching on a regular basis. This now takes place on a regular basis and has had a positive impact on standards of teaching in the school.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

More planned opportunities for pupils to take additional responsibility and to become more independent.

23. The school already offers pupils some opportunities to take responsibility. Older pupils supervise the collection of packed lunch boxes and distribute registers in the morning and pupils in all classes take turns to return them to the school office. Each class operates a system of monitors to carry out general jobs, such as taking responsibility for resources. At present, however, these opportunities are limited. For example, there is no school council where pupils could become involved in listening to others' ideas, discussing them with staff and making suggestions that might lead to improvement. There is no planned development in the degree of responsibility for pupils to take as they get older; for example, there are very limited opportunities for pupils to work independently without direct adult supervision for a short time, or for them to develop their library skills with non-fiction books.

The consistency of teachers' marking.

24. Teachers have worked very hard and successfully to link their marking of pupils' written work to the learning objectives of the lessons and to pupils' individual targets for improvement. Their comments are supportive and give the pupils a good idea of how they can improve. For example, *'I really enjoyed reading your story with you. You have planned and thought about the structure. Well done! Please try not to use too many **and** words in your writing'*. Teachers' marking in other subjects is not as consistent or informative. A single word or short phrase offers pupils no real idea of what the teacher finds to praise or how they might do better next time.

More visitors to the school to enrich the curriculum.

25. Although visitors do come to school to extend the range of pupils' experiences, they are limited in number. The school recognises that visits from artists, actors and musicians can also play a part in enriching an already wide curriculum.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In the context of its many strengths and the very high standards of pupils' work, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- (1) review the opportunities for pupils to take on additional responsibility and develop independence; for example, providing opportunities for them to improve and apply their non-fiction retrieval skills;
- (2) ensure that the school's marking policy is as consistently and positively applied in all subjects as it is for pupils' written work.

The following minor point for improvement should be considered as the basis for an action plan:

- (3) review the arrangements for inviting visitors into school to enrich aspects of the curriculum.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

16

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

12

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
6	56	38	0	0	0	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	161
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	3
Special educational needs	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	10
English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	4
Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	8
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	2

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.6
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	28	29	57

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	26	27	27
	Girls	27	28	29
	Total	53	55	56
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	93 (99)	96 (99)	98 (99)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	27	27	28
	Girls	27	28	29
	Total	54	55	57
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	95 (99)	96 (99)	100 (100)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	3
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	100
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23
Average class size	23

Education support staff: YR – Y2

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	48

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Financial information

Financial year	1999 / 2000
	£
Total income	354,676
Total expenditure	330,254
Expenditure per pupil	2,039
Balance brought forward from previous year	20,633
Balance carried forward to next year	45,055

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate 57.4%

Number of questionnaires sent out	176
Number of questionnaires returned	101

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	65	31	3	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	52	41	2	4	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	61	34	1	1	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	42	37	13	2	4
The teaching is good.	59	36	2	1	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	35	50	8	3	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	54	37	6	1	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	60	36	3	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	40	45	10	3	2
The school is well led and managed.	64	32	3	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	55	39	3	1	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	19	49	20	4	8