



Priory Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 103831
LEA Dudley
Inspection number 277005
Inspection dates 10 January 2006 to 11 January 2006
Reporting inspector David Carrington RISP

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary	School address	Off Limes Road
School category	Community		Dudley
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		West Midlands DY1 4AQ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01384 816845
Number on roll	656	Fax number	01384 816846
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Clive Fieldhouse
Date of previous inspection	8 May 2000	Headteacher	Mr Michael Millman

Age group 3 to 11	Inspection dates 10 January 2006 - 11 January 2006	Inspection number 277005
-----------------------------	---	------------------------------------

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by four Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Priory is a very large primary school where most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The number of pupils who speak English as an additional language is low. Over a third of the pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is above the national average. More pupils have learning difficulties and disabilities than in most primary schools, often because of pressures at home. When children start in the Foundation Stage their level of skills and knowledge is low, especially in their personal, social and emotional development and speech.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Priory Primary School provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. The school's evaluation of its effectiveness matches this assessment.

The background of pupils in school has changed significantly over the past few years and there are now far many more pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, and others who take considerable time to settle to learning because of the pressures they face at home. Many of the pupils with the most difficulties are in Years 1 and 2. Pupils in these two years make satisfactory progress, but the standards they reach are low because they have so much ground to make up. Progress is good in the Foundation Stage and standards in junior classes have been improved well since the previous inspection, although they are still below average. The overall progress made by pupils is satisfactory and is improving throughout the school.

The school has an accurate understanding of how well it is performing. Senior staff track pupils' progress satisfactorily. However, this process is not yet finely enough focused to ensure that pupils always have work that is fully matched to their needs, especially the more able. The headteacher and deputy headteacher give a very clear lead to the school and staff and the governors are committed to improvement. The school is improving steadily and has the capacity to continue doing so. It gives satisfactory value for money.

Pupils have good attitudes and are generally well behaved. The school is a settled and harmonious community. The quality of teaching is satisfactory and is good in some parts of the school, but weaknesses remain Years 1 to 4. Some lessons lack sufficient pace and expectations could be higher. Support given to pupils with different forms of learning difficulties is effective in helping them to work productively. This ensures that the school is an inclusive community.

Children receive a good education in their early years in school and succeed well. During their two years in the Foundation Stage they move ahead well from a very limited starting level, especially in their personal, social and emotional development and speech.

Parents hold positive views of the school and are growing in confidence to support their children in their learning. A few do not support the school's good efforts to improve attendance, and so absence rates and lateness are greater than in most other schools.

What the school should do to improve further

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve planning to ensure that all pupils, especially the more able, are set work and targets that are sufficiently challenging.
- Improve the quality of teaching and the rate at which pupils learn by making lessons brisker, especially in Years 1 to 4.
- Further develop the partnership with parents to improve attendance.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils make satisfactory progress, although standards are below average by the time they leave school. Standards in Year 6 have risen since the previous inspection, with much better results in mathematics last year, and also sound improvement in English.

Children in the Foundation Stage learn well and make good progress. Many of them start in the nursery with very limited experience of working with others and they have much ground to make up. They build up their skills and knowledge rapidly once they have settled.

Pupils in Years 5 and 6 also make good progress. In these two years learning is well paced. Many pupils in Years 1 and 2 take a fairly long time to settle to school because of the pressures they face at home. They make satisfactory progress but, because they have much to learn, their standards are low. Progress is also satisfactory in Years 3 and 4. Throughout the school the pace of lessons is not always brisk nor work matched closely enough to pupils' needs. The school recognises that these features hold back progress.

The school successfully adapts the work set for pupils who speak English as an additional language so that they can learn as well as others. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities also make satisfactory progress. Many other pupils have difficulties with learning, often because of pressures at home. The school supports these pupils well and enables them to make satisfactory progress.

The school met its targets last year, but recognises that they need to be more challenging in future. The tracking of pupils' progress towards these targets is developing well, though the process is not yet consistent or rigorous enough to identify where progress slackens.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being are good. Pupils say they are happy in school and enjoy their learning. They have good attitudes, behave well and respect and relate well to each other and the adults in their school.

Despite the school's good strategies to encourage attendance, the rate is below the national average. This is because a few families take holidays in term time and not all parents support the school in its good work to raise the level of attendance. A minority of pupils are often late to school.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They show consideration for each other and moral values are taught well. Spiritual and cultural education is supported well by regular acts of worship.

Pupils have good understanding of how to stay safe. They take a good role in the local community and raise funds for local, national and international charities. Pupils are beginning to make healthy eating choices. The daily breakfast club and tuck shop

provide well-balanced choices of food. Pupils are given good opportunities to take responsibility. For example, older pupils confidently carry out the role of school secretary at lunchtime. They work well in teams and are encouraged to show their initiative. Basic skills are built soundly, which enables pupils to prepare satisfactorily for the world outside school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is satisfactory, with several good features, but there are inconsistencies between year groups. Good teaching in the Foundation Stage involves teachers planning a wide range of interesting activities that captures the children's imagination and help develop their independence.

Good teaching in Years 5 and 6 also ensures pupils' progress is brisk. Teachers use questions and a variety of approaches to make learning productive and brisk. For example, in a Year 6 top set mathematics lesson the teacher set a good pace to learning and provided challenging work for the pupils. They quickly learned to use negative numbers to measure the movement of a shape across a grid.

Teaching in Years 1–4 is satisfactory overall but there are weaknesses that are resulting in pupils not yet making the progress they are capable of. On occasions, activities are not well matched to pupils' different capabilities and this results in some finding work too easy and others too hard. A number of lessons do not move along fast enough.

All teachers have a caring approach to meeting the complex learning needs of pupils, and teaching assistants give good support. Consequently, most pupils are interested learners.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory overall and there are a few strengths. All the expected subjects are included, and there are satisfactory links between subjects that enable pupils to develop their basic skills. Pupils say they enjoy the special events in school, such as the 'Healthy School Week'. It is evident that they contribute to pupils' personal development and progress.

The arrangements for grouping pupils by ability for English and mathematics works satisfactorily. It is most successful in Years 5 and 6 where there is generally good challenge for more able pupils. However, in other years the challenge is not consistent. Planning is not always precise enough in identifying the targets for pupils in different ability groups, and often all pupils are given the same work.

Regular personal, social and health education lessons ensure that pupils are aware of the risks from drugs and smoking. Support staff work well to ensure all pupils, regardless of background, benefit satisfactorily from the full curriculum. The 'Nurturing

Groups' for pupils with frequent absence are effective in helping these pupils to settle to purposeful learning.

There is a good range of after-school activities and clubs. Many are focused on health, fitness and sport. Pupils are enthusiastic about these activities and list them amongst their favourite things in school. A popular 'Breakfast Club' ensures that pupils have a good start to the day.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Overall, the care, guidance and support provided for pupils are good and a strength of the school. The school makes sure that learning is settled and purposeful. Every pupil is valued and all adults are committed to encouraging pupils with their learning. Pupils are confident to discuss any worries with the staff.

The school has very good links with many external agencies. The special needs manager provides good support for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. Learning mentors work well with the most vulnerable pupils and others who find learning difficult. As a result, most pupils are keen to come to school and learn new things. Arrangements for child protection are strong. Health and safety procedures are good and the school is kept clean and attractive.

Assessment has been improved and is satisfactory. However, the school knows that the use of information from assessment is not used consistently to set challenging work for pupils. Although pupils know their targets, they do not have enough opportunities to talk to their teachers about how well they are reaching them.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall and have improved since the inspection in 2000. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have led school improvement effectively, and other staff and governors now have a more central and satisfactory role in raising standards. After a period when the number of pupils with problems in learning rose significantly and standards fell, senior leaders have worked successfully to ensure that learning is more productive and pupils' progress at least satisfactory.

Staff work together as a team with shared goals and commitment. Governors know the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They keep a careful watch on its work and make sure that money is used efficiently.

The improvements in leadership and management have led to better progress and standards, although they have not ensured that pupils' progress is consistently good in all areas of the school. Whilst there is still work to do to raise standards further, pupils' behaviour and their willingness to work are strengths.

The school judges what it does honestly and accurately and inspectors agree with its evaluations. The systems it has to check and assess performance are effective but the targets it is setting for pupils' achievements are not sufficiently challenging. The school has identified a number of ways in which to improve this process and they form sensible priorities.

Overall the school is adapting effectively to the important changes it faces. Gradually the problems arising from pupils' learning difficulties and disabilities, pressured home backgrounds, irregular schooling or prolonged absence are being broken down. School leaders have the potential to build on this success, and to make sure that every pupil progresses well.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
--	-----------------------	--------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	4	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

The Pupils Priory Primary School Cedar Road Dudley DY1 4HN

12 January 2006

Dear Pupils

Thank you for welcoming us to your school earlier this week. We enjoyed talking with you and discovering what you think about your school.

Many of you told us that the best things in school are your staff, who look after you well, the different clubs and societies you can join and the bacon sandwiches at the Breakfast Club.

We think there are many other good things in school. The main ones are:

Most of you enjoy your learning and try hard.

You are mostly well behaved and you get on well with others.

The teachers and other adults in school help you to sort problems and worries quickly and sensibly.

Your headteacher wants to provide the best education possible for you.

We have identified three main areas for improvement in school.

Your work is not always hard enough.

You need to work faster in some classes.

Not all of you come to school every day.

Your headteacher and your teachers are keen to make these changes. You can help them by telling them how well you think you are doing and by not being late for school.

We hope that you enjoy the changes to come, even if your work is harder. Good luck with your studies.

Yours sincerely

David Carrington Lead Inspector