



# Priory Common First School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 110380  
**LEA** Milton Keynes LEA  
**Inspection number** 278419  
**Inspection dates** 21 September 2005 to 22 September 2005  
**Reporting inspector** Vanessa Ward AI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	First	<b>School address</b>	Scatterill Close
<b>School category</b>	Community		Bradwell
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 8		Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire MK13 9EZ
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01908321646
<b>Number on roll</b>	172	<b>Fax number</b>	01908226883
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Ms Sue Howarth
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	5 June 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Anne Fox

<b>Age group</b> 4 to 8	<b>Inspection dates</b> 21 September 2005 - 22 September 2005	<b>Inspection number</b> 278419
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The school is of average size, with the pupils coming from a mix of social backgrounds. The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is average, as is the proportion of pupils whose first language is believed not to be English. The percentages of pupils entitled to free school meals and with learning difficulties and disabilities are below average. The number of pupils who join the school other than at the start of the year is slightly above average. The school has had several changes of leadership and staffing in the last few years.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

The school's effectiveness is good and it provides good value for money. The school has particular strengths in the leadership and management of the headteacher. There is a strong sense of commitment among the staff and governors to enable each pupil to do their best within a calm and safe environment. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and behave well. The adults provide good levels of care and support for pupils' personal and academic development. The school is aware that it can improve this support by increasing the involvement of pupils in assessing for themselves how well they are doing. Although teaching is observed regularly, the benefits which accrue are not as great as they could be. The good leadership and management of the Foundation Stage enable the children to achieve well and provide them with a good start. The teachers build upon this successfully and, by the time the pupils leave the school, a large majority of them attain above average standards in English, mathematics and science. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. The school is already working towards further development in the provision for, and teaching of, information and communication technology (ICT). Even though there have been significant changes in staffing, the school has embarked upon several new initiatives, such as making managers more effective. The school's judgements of its own performance are, for the most part, accurate but it takes too modest a view of its leadership, management and overall effectiveness, which inspectors found to be good. The recent improvements, together with the staff's understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and of what needs to happen next, indicate that the school is well placed to make further improvements.

### What the school should do to improve further

\* Develop the provision for, and teaching of, ICT across all subjects.\* Increase the benefits to teaching and learning gained from lesson observations. \* Give pupils greater involvement in evaluating what they have learned in lessons.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

The pupils make good progress. Assessment records show that when they enter the school, the children's skills are slightly below those expected of four-year-olds, particularly in language and literacy and mathematics. In the national tests in Year 2, and by the time they leave the school at the end of Year 3, a large majority of the pupils achieve standards in reading, writing and mathematics which are better than most pupils of their age. A contributory factor is the setting of challenging targets for each pupil in reading, writing and mathematics. The headteacher tracks each pupil's progress diligently and makes sure that appropriate support is provided to meet their differing needs. This action has helped maintain good standards, despite teaching being only satisfactory overall. Progress records indicate that different groups of pupils achieve equally well, from their individual starting points. This includes pupils from

differing backgrounds, those with learning difficulties and disabilities and those who have the potential to do well. As the school's population changes, provision is reviewed. For example, increases in the number of pupils who are learning English as an additional language and the number who join the school mid-year, have led to changes in the support provided. Through such action, the school makes sure that it is doing all it can to enable these pupils to achieve their potential.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They enjoy school, behave well and are willing to work hard, all of which help their achievement. Teachers encourage pupils to think about the consequences of their decisions and how their behaviour may affect others. This helps pupils to develop a sense of responsibility. For example, pupils on the school council have a formal role in helping younger pupils behave well and in listening to their views and concerns. The school council also manages a small budget. These activities help the pupils to gain self confidence and a mature outlook as they move through the school. Attendance is good and pupils are punctual. Children feel very safe in school and learn to get on well with each other, as equal members of the Priory Common 'family'. This can be seen at playtimes and lunchtimes, when pupils waiting at the 'Friendship Stop' are soon involved by other children in their games. Pupils have a good understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle. For example, the school provides fruit at break time and each class is involved in recycling the leftovers into compost for the school garden.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

The school is accurate in judging its teaching to be satisfactory. There is no inadequate teaching and some good teaching. There have been changes of staff at all levels in the past 12 months. This has caused some interruption to the school's programme to improve teaching. The senior staff are now working to re-establish the consistently good teaching which was hitherto a significant strength of the school. The teachers have good relationships with the pupils, and this helps the pupils to feel confident and safe in school. This is very noticeable in the Foundation Stage, where the children have settled quickly into their new school. Pupils talk about enjoying learning, one pupil commenting that, 'Science experiments are exciting!' There is some good practice in helping pupils to understand how well they are doing, but this is not consistent among classes. In one challenging lesson, the evaluation by pupils of the strength of paper towers which they had built provided them with a good understanding of what they had learned and how they could improve. The school is already planning to give pupils greater involvement in evaluating their work. In ICT, the school recognises the need to improve teaching. The teachers give careful consideration to the individual needs of pupils in their planning and use assessment information well. The teaching

of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and those who are learning English as an additional language is carefully planned to enable them to make good progress. The newly introduced assessment procedures in the Foundation Stage are very thorough. The school works hard to involve parents in their children's individual targets.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum provides pupils with a broad and interesting range of work. A recent review of the curriculum is leading to improvements in planning and teaching across a range of subjects. In the Foundation Stage, the school is introducing a better balance between direct teaching and providing the children with a choice of activities. Educational visits and visitors to the school add interest to the pupils' work. During the inspection, visitors helped pupils to make a tile mosaic. The school very effectively promotes understanding of how to stay safe and healthy through work in science, physical education and personal, social and health education. It makes satisfactory provision for the learning of basic skills of reading, writing and numeracy. Although the provision for ICT has improved since the last inspection, the school is aware that it needs to develop this further. Pupils have insufficient opportunities to use ICT to support their learning across many subjects.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils and parents agree that children are well cared for, guided and supported. As one parent wrote, 'I want to know about every stage of my child's development and feel my concerns are listened to, and at Priory Common that is exactly what I get.' This partnership between parents, children and teachers helps the school to know all of its pupils and bring out the best in them. Child protection procedures are clear and effectively implemented. The school works well with local agencies and specialists to make sure that pupils' safety and welfare are appropriately catered for. The school takes effective action to deal with bullying and pupils know where to go for help. Teachers and other staff provide good support for children who find learning difficult. They plan carefully to meet their needs and monitor their progress to ensure that they achieve as well as they are able.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Although the headteacher has been in post for only a few months, and has had to manage several staffing changes, she has already had a significant impact on school improvement. The rigorous monitoring and evaluation now carried out by the headteacher and subject leaders has led to accurate identification of the school's needs. A review of the teaching in several subjects, such as history and art, has brought about more focused teaching. Subject leaders are effective in influencing developments in their subjects. The school uses its school improvement plan very successfully to

drive improvement forward. It keeps governors and staff fully involved in all stages of the planning, monitoring and evaluation of progress. The professional development of all staff is a well-established process, which is used successfully to improve pupils' achievement. The headteacher and subject leaders regularly assess the quality of teaching through lesson observations. This provides some useful guidance to staff, but too often there is no follow-up to determine the impact of this guidance on teaching and learning. This reduces the overall effectiveness of the observations. The governing body carries out its responsibilities conscientiously and fulfils statutory requirements. The governors are very supportive of, and are involved in, all aspects of school development. Every child is valued and the school is successful in ensuring that all pupils have equal opportunities to develop fully. The school works hard and successfully to involve parents and the community in school life. It makes good use of external agencies to improve pupils' achievement and personal development. It manages resources well, making sure they are directed towards school improvement.

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## Inspection judgements

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

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2	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	2	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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	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	2	NA

### The quality of provision

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

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	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

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
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	NA
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
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**

As you know, we visited your school recently for two days to see how well you are taught and looked after, and how well you learn. Thank you for being so friendly and willing to talk to us. It was really useful to listen to what you had to say about what you enjoy doing.

The things we think are good about your school are: \* Your headteacher and teachers are good at finding ways to improve your school so that you learn better and enjoy your work more. \* All of the grown ups in school look after each of you so that you feel safe and happy. You told us that you know they will always help you if you are upset or worried. This helps you enjoy being in school. \* Your teachers collect information about how you are doing in your work and use this well to give you extra help when you need it. \* We noticed how well you behave and look after each other. We also noticed how hard you try with your work. These are good things which help to make your school a happy place.

We think your school can become even better if: \* The school buys more computer equipment and the teachers help you to use it more often in your work. \* Your teachers help each other to make the teaching even better than it is already. \* Your teachers give you more help in understanding how well you are doing. Your teachers know how to do this. We hope that you will help them as much as you can, so that together you can improve your learning even further.