



Priestlands School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 116416
LEA Hampshire LEA
Inspection number 279824
Inspection dates 22 March 2006 to 23 March 2006
Reporting inspector Peter Green

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

Type of school	Comprehensive	School address	North Street
School category	Community		Pennington
Age range of pupils	11 to 16		Lymington SO41 8FZ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01590677033
Number on roll	1163	Fax number	01590670398
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Clive Milone
Date of previous inspection	18 January 2000	Headteacher	Mr Chris Willsher

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Priestlands is a large, semi-rural comprehensive school in Hampshire. There are 1163 pupils on roll aged between 11 and 16. It has specialist Arts status gained in 2004 and its numbers have increased since its last inspection. The percentage of pupils eligible for free schools meals is close to the national average as is the number of pupils with statements of special educational needs. The vast majority of the pupils are of White British Heritage. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is in line with the national average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Priestlands is a good school with several outstanding features. It gives good value for money. The leaders and managers know the school well and the self-evaluation is accurate, clearly stating the strengths and areas for improvement. The Senior Leadership Team works very well together and sets a clear direction. The headteacher involves all his staff in effective planning to meet the needs of all pupils. The support for students is good with a full range of measures in place to help pupils of all abilities and talents. Achievement is good and standards are above average. They have continued to rise since the last inspection. The school works very effectively with many partner organisations and the community to develop the social awareness and responsibilities of pupils.

The pupils feel they are in a safe environment and the school promotes healthy lifestyles in the curriculum and in the services it provides. Most pupils behave well but the school is aware that a few pupils do not behave properly and has put in place measures to tackle this. The range of sporting and extra-curricular activities and trips is extensive; pupils and parents speak highly of these. Pupils make good progress between the key stages and results in GCSEs are very good. Monitoring, review and target setting of pupils' performance is excellent. Teaching and learning are good, though marking of work does not always show pupils clearly enough how to improve. The use of information and communications technology (ICT) is good, though progress in developing the independent learning skills of pupils has been slow.

Parents and governors are most supportive of the school. They work well with the head and help to set a caring and pupil-centred ethos. The capacity to improve is outstanding based on the track record of improvements and progress already made.

What the school should do to improve further

- * Focus more upon developing pupils' independent learning skills in order to raise achievement still further.
- * Ensure more consistency in the quality of marking so that pupils have a better understanding of how they can improve their work.
- * Continue to improve the behaviour of a minority of pupils.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good and standards are above average. GCSE results are well above the national average, having risen consistently over the last four years. Achievement in maths and science is particularly good throughout the school. Achievement in 2005 was slightly higher than average for a small group of lower attaining pupils and those with significant learning difficulties.

Pupils enter the school with attainment at about the national average and they make good progress in Years 7, 8 and 9 especially in science, although in English, where girls performed better than boys, progress has been slower. The teachers are aware of this and are working to correct it.

Good progress is maintained in Years 10 and 11 so that the proportion of pupils achieving five or more GCSE subjects at grades A*-C is well above average. At the end of Year 11, standards are above national averages, with a significant improvement in English in Years 10 and 11 in recent years. Nearly all pupils (97%) achieved A*-G grades in at least five subjects. Progress and achievement in ICT and science were very good, with excellent GCSE results in 2005.

The school sets high targets and for the last three years these have been achieved. The system for setting these targets is a strength; it is robust with follow up and monitoring of targets well established. The performance review system clearly links individual pupils' performance to teachers' accountability. The school analyses its results carefully and knows what it needs to do to be outstanding.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development is good. Attendance is in line with the national average. Most pupils conduct themselves well and clearly enjoy school. Some parents are concerned about behaviour but the majority of pupils behave well in class and around the school. However, the school is aware that a few pupils do not behave properly and has put in place measures to bring about improvement which now need to continue. Pupils feel safe in school and say that incidents of bullying are managed well.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Spiritual development is not overtly planned into the curriculum but Year 9 showed outstanding spiritual development when dealing with issues presented to them on Holocaust Memorial Day. Cultural development is also very strong and reflects the advantages of Arts College status.

Pupils assume responsibilities very well and many show very good skills in working with others, particularly in community based activities, Young Enterprise and charity work. The student council is very effective and pupils feel their opinions are acted upon. Many pupils gain confidence and new skills through involvement in the many extra-curricular activities offered, including the Duke of Edinburgh awards. Awareness of healthy lifestyles and personal safety is good and many pupils participate in extra-curricular sports. However, not all choose to follow advice, for example about the wearing of safety helmets when cycling to school. Pupils understand about the world of work and are well prepared for progression to college or employment.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers are enthusiastic and plan thoroughly; however, insufficient attention is given to developing the independent learning skills of the pupils. Some teachers concentrate on teaching too much and not enough on what the pupils should learn.

In the best lessons observed, teachers used good subject knowledge to plan a variety of interesting activities that kept pupils' attention, motivating them to learn effectively. They used the resources well to explain information clearly to pupils, and history teachers, for example, used electronic whiteboards effectively. Pupils are widely encouraged to use ICT and do so well to enhance their learning. Overall, classes are managed effectively and relationships between teachers and pupils are good. In a few lessons, however, teachers did not manage behaviour well resulting in pupils' lack of concentration and effort.

Lesson plans have clear teaching objectives but sometimes insufficient emphasis is given to what pupils should learn both in lessons themselves and in marking pupils' work. Though pupils know their own levels and targets, they are not clear about the small steps they should take to improve. In some lessons observed, teachers led discussions for too long and pupils were not encouraged strongly enough to take responsibility for their own learning. Exceptions were seen in some mathematics and ICT lessons, where teachers helped pupils to assess their own learning very effectively. In two outstanding drama lessons, pupils responded with great enjoyment to opportunities to research, devise and evaluate their own presentations.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The school provides an excellent curriculum, meeting the full range of pupils' needs. Through its curriculum, the school achieves its aim of providing equal opportunities for all pupils to succeed. A very good range of academic and vocational courses appeal to pupils' different interests. More courses, especially in Years 10 and 11 are being developed as a result of the school's specialist performing and visual arts status. In all years, excellent support for pupils with social, emotional and learning difficulties enables them to make good progress. Provision for able and talented pupils is also being developed very well.

The school has excellent links with the local further education college, and pupils transfer smoothly to post-16 education. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 benefit from alternative work related courses that increase their motivation to learn. The personal, social and health education (PSHE) course provides pupils with very good information about what constitutes a healthy, safe lifestyle. Citizenship is being actively promoted.

Many pupils take full advantage of excellent opportunities for sports and cultural activities after school, as well as a range of revision and booster classes. As a specialist college, the school has responded very well to the requirement to provide for the wider community. Developments such as a Rock School and Youth Theatre provide welcome opportunities for children of all ages and adults to participate in very worthwhile activities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care and guidance are very well planned and monitored. All requirements for health and safety are met. Very good provision is made for pupils with specific needs and monitoring procedures are thorough. Health and safety routines and risk assessments are all fully in place and child protection procedures are clear and widely understood. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are exceptionally well supported.

The new Pupil Support Managers are proving very effective and there are good systems for monitoring attendance and behaviour. Homework clubs and support classes help pupils to reach their targets. Parents and pupils welcome the Academic Review days and the opportunities to review progress and targets. However, academic guidance through marking and assessment is not sufficiently consistent to ensure that pupils know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.

Pupils appreciate the way they are trusted by the school to be conscientious and responsible. They are given very clear guidance on healthy lifestyles and what it means to be a good citizen. However, the quality of support from tutors varies across the year groups and, although the PSHE programme is good, it is not consistently delivered. Careers education and guidance are very effective and pupils are given very good advice and guidance on subject and course option choices.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good, with some outstanding features. They strongly support the good achievement of pupils. The head teacher provides outstanding personal leadership in driving the school forward. Other members of the senior leadership team, and heads of subjects and heads of years, share the vision of a school geared to providing excellent opportunities for pupils to achieve well.

Senior managers and individual teachers undertake detailed and consistent monitoring of achievement and performance, as a culture of rigorous self-evaluation becomes more embedded. This has enabled the school to meet challenging targets. The school's evaluation of its own performance is accurate in nearly all respects. However, there are some inconsistencies in the way in which departments monitor aspects such as marking.

A particular strength of the leadership is the imaginative way in which the school's arts college specialist status has enhanced both provision for pupils and the school's

reputation. Other subjects have benefited from input from the arts. A strong contribution to the community is made through the arts, for example through music and drama, and there are fruitful partnerships with a wide range of schools and other institutions.

Governors play a more significant role in monitoring than at the time of the previous inspection, and share the vision for continued improvement. The school consults regularly with parents and acts promptly on their feedback.

The school has succeeded in resolving recent staffing difficulties, and is addressing a budget deficit through prudent financial management, without detriment to provision. The senior leadership team recognises the need to improve accommodation, including redecoration of classrooms while keeping tight control of finances. The leadership team is committed to the pupils and to continuous improvement, and ensures good value for money.

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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>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	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

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ 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

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	3	NA
The attendance of learners	3	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	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	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?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	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	1	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

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	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Pupils

I am writing on behalf of the inspection team that visited your school on the 22 and 23 March 2006 to let you know our findings and to thank you for your help during our visit. We were very pleased to talk to so many of you from all year groups. Your comments helped to give us a good understanding of your school. We enjoyed our visit and we appreciated the friendly and courteous welcome you gave us. We agree with the view of many of you that Priestlands is a good school. Our report on the school will soon be published and it will be available in full for you, your parents, guardians and others to read. Here is a brief outline of the main points made in the report which we hope will be helpful to you and your teachers.

We consider your school is doing well because it: * helps you to achieve good results* provides an outstanding curriculum through which you can develop your skills and knowledge* provides good care, guidance and support for you* offers a good range of out of school activities, trips and visits* helps you to contribute positively to the community.

We think the school is well led and managed and the staff are keen to help you; but we also think the school can improve further by: * helping you to develop independent learning skills both in lessons and for when you work on your own* making sure that when teachers mark your work, they explain more clearly how you can improve* improving the behaviour of the few pupils who misbehave. We believe that your headteacher, teachers and members of the support staff will be able to make these and other improvements and we hope you will all contribute to them and benefit from them. With our thanks and best wishes,

Yours sincerely

Peter Green

Her Majesty's Inspector