



The Priory Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 131212
LEA Sandwell
Inspection number 284575
Inspection dates 8 November 2005 to 9 November 2005
Reporting inspector Christine Field RISP

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Dorsett Road
School category	Community		Friar Park
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Wednesbury, West Midlands WS10 0JG
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0121 5561383
Number on roll	308	Fax number	0121 556 0520
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Ian Carr
Date of previous inspection	15 June 1998	Headteacher	Mr Trevor Hancock

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The Priory Primary School is situated in Friar Park, an area of Wednesbury with significant social and economic disadvantage. Most pupils are of White British heritage. In all year groups, around a quarter of pupils have learning difficulties or disabilities. Attainment on entry to the school is well below average. At the time of the inspection, all classes were located in temporary accommodation, the computer suite was out of use and major building work affected the school's usual organisation.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The evidence from the inspection confirms the school's view that its overall effectiveness is satisfactory. Over the last 12 months, the school has gone from strength to strength. Parents and governors are very proud of The Priory and the successful way it serves the needs of its community. Good care is taken of the pupils and very supportive relationships help many to overcome personal problems and build good social skills. The school has forged strong partnerships with a range of agencies that are beneficial to learners' good well-being.

Children receive a good start to their education in the nursery and reception classes, and achieve well even though many do not reach the level expected for their age by the time they start Year 1. Achievement in Years 1 to 6 is satisfactory overall with strengths in English due to the school's good improvement strategies. More work is required to enable pupils to achieve better standards in mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) and in using marking and target setting to aid pupils' progress. Pupils with learning difficulties achieve well because of the effective provision made for them. The achievement of high attaining pupils is not good enough. There is positive use of target setting to support learning in English that has yet to be extended to other subjects. Rigorous checking and effective management are assisting satisfactory teaching to get better.

Leadership and management are satisfactory, with important strengths that are driving standards up, ensuring a high quality of care and assuring satisfactory value for money. The headteacher gives very good leadership and the good senior team have crystal clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Staff are united in their determination to move the school forward. The involvement of governors, parents and pupils in the school's self-evaluation process is developing. There is secure capacity for further improvement, as reflected in the positive progress made since the last inspection.

What the school should do to improve further

- Press ahead with raising standards in mathematics, particularly for the higher attainers.
- Raise standards in ICT and widen its use across the curriculum.
- Ensure that target-setting systems and teachers' marking support pupils' next steps in learning and involve them in reviewing their progress.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

From a well below average starting point, children in nursery and reception achieve well. They are given good support to assist the development of language and mathematical skills but the standards they reach are below those expected when they transfer to Year 1. Standards in Years 2 and 6 are below average overall. Progress during Years 1 to 6 presents a mixed picture. It is good across the school in English

and science and is satisfactory in other subjects. The school has worked effectively to raise achievement in English and science. The average standards attained by Year 6 in the 2005 National Curriculum tests demonstrate the progress made. Standards in mathematics were not as positive but showed a reasonable increase on those seen in 2004, and reflect satisfactory achievement. Challenging targets have been set to aid progress in Year 6 and inspection evidence indicates that pupils are well on track to meet them. The use of targets to support better progress is not as rigorous in other years. Problems with computer resources have hampered progress in ICT and standards are not high enough.

Lower attaining pupils, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities, benefit from tailor-made work programmes that support their consistent and steady progress in all years. These pupils achieve well in meeting their individual targets. Those who are potentially higher attaining do not receive a similar measured approach to assist their achievement and the progress they make could be better, particularly in mathematics.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Children in nursery and reception build confident social skills because of the good support they are given that nurtures their personal self-esteem. Infant and junior pupils show enjoyment in their learning, have positive attitudes and generally good behaviour. Their attendance is satisfactory. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is positive and is assisting them in growing into responsible future citizens. Since the last inspection, there has been good attention paid to cultural aspects. For example, pupils' celebration of Diwali involved them in learning about cultural dress, tasting Indian food and making divas. Pupils adopt safe practices and are growing in their understanding about a healthy lifestyle, although their lunches do not wholly reflect this. Pupils make a positive contribution to the community, for example through involvement with the annual town arts festival and their work on a neighbourhood allotment.

The school is a caring community that fosters good relationships and where pupils get along well together. Many willingly take on responsibilities, for example, as members of the developing school council, who are currently canvassing opinion about the things pupils would like to see in the new school. Other pupils run the annual 'book fayre' or undertake monitor duties. The building of these key skills stands them in sound stead for later working life but more could be done to promote leadership and enterprise.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is satisfactory overall and improving due to the strong focus on raising expectation, pace and challenge in lessons. The good progress pupils make in English is a result of the concerted school action taken over the last 12 months. Nevertheless, the school recognises that improvement can be made to teaching to help quicken progress by ensuring that the skills and knowledge to be learned by all groups of pupils are identified precisely, especially in mathematics and for the higher attainers. The use of targets to help pupils focus their next steps in learning is inconsistent, with marking a particular weakness. Additionally, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to comment on their own work.

There are a number of strengths in teaching. Key amongst these is the very good management of behaviour. This has improved behaviour considerably and has ensured that learning is happy, enjoyable and often fun. Assessment is used effectively to group pupils and to identify where additional support is required. This contributes well to the good quality of provision for pupils with learning difficulties who achieve successfully as a result.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory curriculum. There is a good focus on the basis skills of literacy and numeracy, which is contributing to the effective raising of standards. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage and those with learning difficulties and disabilities are strengths. Both groups work from specific programmes that are adapted to meet individual needs and ensure that personal learning styles are well catered for. In contrast, the curricular needs of the higher attainers are not consistently well met. In Year 6, however, this group is being challenged well in their core studies. The curriculum for ICT has been restricted by a lack of facilities. The computer suite has been out of use for some months, following the theft of the server. Whilst the use of laptops in a number of lessons is a positive feature in supporting presentation, data handling and word processing, there are aspects of control that are not being given enough attention.

There are well chosen visits to enrich the curriculum, and the trip to Shugborough Hall to support history work on the Victorians, for example, was much enjoyed. Residential visits are provided, together with a range of extra activities through the developing partnership with consortium schools.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support of pupils are good. Extremely supportive relationships help many to overcome personal problems and build good social skills. Staff are very adept at both guiding and supporting the learning of those pupils who experience difficulties. The appointment of a learning mentor is working to the best advantage of vulnerable pupils who told inspectors that it is good to have someone to talk to about any worries they have. The arrangements for child protection are very effective and pupils say they feel safe and well looked after. Targets for learning in reading and writing enable staff, pupils and parents to work together to support personal achievement. The school intends to extend this good practice to support pupils' learning in mathematics, and is right to do so. The school has forged good partnerships with others, for example, the nurse, police and fire officers, to assist pupils' well-being.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory, with a key focus on important strengths that are driving standards up, ensuring high quality of care and assuring satisfactory value for money. The school has made rapid progress since its removal from special measures 12 months ago, and has secure capacity to improve further. The headteacher sets high expectations and a very clear direction to the work of the school. There is good self-review that enables very clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Rigorous monitoring and effective management are assisting satisfactory teaching to improve. However, there is more to do in raising standards in mathematics and ICT and making better use of marking and target setting to aid progress. All staff share the headteacher's vision for the future and are working effectively to move the school forward. The good senior team lead by example and are instrumental in driving positive change. The staff team fulfil their various responsibilities well. Governors are supportive and fulfil all required responsibilities but have yet to make a strong enough contribution to the school's otherwise good self-evaluation. This is true of parents, too, who hold good views about the school but in the past have been reluctant to become fully involved in a partnership in education. This is slowly changing with some parents now working as volunteers in school and others involved in the developing parent teacher association.

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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?	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	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?	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	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	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3	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	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	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	3	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

Thank you very much for making us so welcome at your school. We thoroughly enjoyed meeting, talking and sharing lunch with you. It was super to chat with so many of you in the playground and to find out about your hobbies and interests.

What we liked most about your school:

- You like school, behave well and play together sensibly.
- Your teachers enjoy being with you, look after you well and help you to learn.
- There are good links with lots of people in the community who come into school to share things with you.
- The headteacher, other teachers and governors know how to make your school even better.

What we have asked your headteacher and the staff to give more attention to as they work with you to raise standards:

- Make sure that your work is not too easy or too hard and help you learn new things as quickly as you can, particularly in mathematics.
- Ensure that you have plenty of opportunities to use computers and improve your skills.
- Tell you how well you are reaching your personal targets when your work is marked and letting you know what you need to do to move up a level.

We wish you all the best for the future and hope the move to your new school goes well.