



# Priory School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 101856  
**LEA** Croydon LEA  
**Inspection number** 286198  
**Inspection dates** 13 June 2006 to 13 June 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Kay Charlton AI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Special	<b>School address</b>	Tennison Road
<b>School category</b>	Community special		South Norwood
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	12 to 19		London SE25 5RR
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8653 8222
<b>Number on roll</b>	63	<b>Fax number</b>	020 8771 6761
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Rosemary McCluskey
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	10 March 2003	<b>Headteacher</b>	Jillian Thomas

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Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors for one day.

## **Description of the school**

Priory school caters for students aged twelve to nineteen with profound and complex learning difficulties. All have statements of special educational needs. The complexity of students' needs on intake is increasing from year to year and a growing number of the younger students have very complex needs. Students come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. Sixteen students speak English as an additional language. There are four looked after students. The school has Sportsmark, Artsmark Gold and Investors in People Awards.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 2**

Parents justifiably hold Priory School in high regard. They make comments such as 'I am proud of Priory. They deserve a gold medal'. The inspection confirms both the parents' and the school's view that it is a good school. Staff have high expectations of students, and overall teaching and learning are good. In turn, students invariably give of their best and, irrespective of background and ability, achieve well. Occasionally, staff miss opportunities to challenge and extend the learning of the growing number of students with very complex needs. Students of all ages show very positive attitudes to school and virtually all attain or exceed their individual targets. The curriculum is very well matched to students' needs and they achieve particularly well in their personal development.

Care, guidance and support are of a high quality. Staff establish very good relationships with students and, in a calm and purposeful climate, provide exemplary care. There are excellent links with outside agencies that make a very strong contribution to students' personal development and particularly to the provision in the sixth form. The senior management team has a very clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and is actively developing the skills of the staff to ensure the changing needs of the student population are fully met. Governors are very supportive and they ensure all statutory requirements are met. However, they do not always ask sufficiently searching questions about the progress students make in order to check the overall effectiveness of the school and support its drive for improvement. The school has maintained the high standards recognised in the previous inspection. The way the school has responded to meet the changing needs of its students demonstrates good capacity for further improvement. The school provides good value for money.

## **Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form**

### **Grade: 2**

All students make good progress during their time in the sixth form and for some, progress is very good. Given their starting points, this represents good achievement which is reflected in the quality of their Awards Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) portfolios. Overall, teaching and learning is good. Students' personal development is very strong. The curriculum is a noticeable strength. Through the excellent emphasis on developing students' key skills and their work-based skills, they are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage of their education. This is very well supported by the school's work placement programme. Students make an outstanding contribution to the community, for example through work in local supermarkets and primary schools. The school correctly identified the provision in the sixth form as being good with some outstanding features.

## **What the school should do to improve further**

- Ensure that staff always fully challenge and extend the learning of the growing number of students with complex needs.

- Ensure governors ask more searching questions about students' progress.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Throughout the school, students achieve well. Staff set challenging targets for each student that are well matched to their needs. As a result, students of different backgrounds and abilities usually meet or exceed these targets. A good emphasis is placed on the development of students' skills in speaking and listening, reading, writing and in gaining understanding in mathematics. With the support of a wide range of communication aids, students gain confidence in expressing their views. A good example was when students referred to the things they enjoyed about a recent residential visit. In mathematics, students show a particularly good understanding of number in real life situations such as during their regular visits to a local supermarket. The school invariably meets or exceeds the targets agreed with the Local Authority.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Overall, students' personal development is good. It is particularly strong in the sixth form. Students' behaviour is good and they develop very positive attitudes to learning. Older students demonstrate particularly mature attitudes. This represents a very considerable improvement compared with their behaviour and attitudes on entry to the school. Students respond positively to the very comprehensive programme of personal development which pervades all aspects of school life. They try to adopt a healthy lifestyle and they explained how they have changed their eating habits both inside and out of school. Students know how to keep themselves safe, and are clear about what they should do if they are bullied, for example. They enjoy their lessons and attendance is good overall. Students make an outstanding contribution to the community through activities within and out of school. These include work experience in the sixth form, and a wide range of other activities which enrich the curriculum. Students develop their workplace and other key skills, such as working with others, very well. As a result, they are exceptionally well prepared for the challenges of the next stage of their education by the time they leave. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and students develop their citizenship skills and knowledge of other religions very effectively. Staff make every effort to include all pupils, whatever their difficulties, and exclusions are rare.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good across the school. Staff work very well as a team and show a high level of commitment to every student. They encourage students in their

learning with a great sense of enthusiasm and ensure that students' individual needs are met. Students say that 'staff help us a lot'. Staff make particularly good use of pictures, symbols, gestures and resources to involve students very actively in lessons. A good example of this was when they read a story to students called 'Not Now Bernard'. Visits out of school are also used imaginatively to motivate pupils in learning. Generally, staff manage students' behaviour well so that a calm and purposeful atmosphere pervades the school. Occasionally, however, opportunities are lost to challenge and extend the learning of those students with very complex needs.

Assessment is good. Throughout the school, 'small step' assessments are used well to set targets for each student and to move them on to the next stage of their learning.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

#### **Grade for sixth form: 1**

The curriculum is good overall. For students in the sixth form it is excellent. Throughout the school the curriculum is carefully matched to the needs of the students and enrichment activities provide excellent breadth to the opportunities available to students. The links made with external agencies, such as local schools and colleges and Riding for the Disabled, make a very significant contribution to students' learning, especially in the sixth form. All students make good use of the national Progress File to record and celebrate their achievements. In the sixth form, students finalise their Progress File and use it very effectively to gain entry to the next stage in their education. They all attain their ASDAN Bronze Award and most also successfully complete further modules that extend their independence. Through the careful development of their key skills, their work placements and organising their own social events, such as the Valentine and Leavers' Discos, sixth form students are exceptionally well prepared for the challenges that face them once they leave school.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Excellent care is provided for students based on very good relationships between students and staff, and good team work. Arrangements for safeguarding students are robust and reviewed on a regular basis. The health and safety of students is promoted very well. Teaching and support staff show commitment to ensuring high levels of care for students at all times, for example during breaks and at lunchtime. At these times they are vigilant, and conscientiously implement the school's procedures.

Support and guidance for students' academic and personal development is good. The school's review of its assessment procedures is helping to ensure more precise information is available to guide parents in shaping the future for their children.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leaders are focussed effectively on raising standards and on promoting students' personal development and well-being. The headteacher and senior team provide very strong leadership and staff work together well with a clear sense of purpose. The school has achieved good improvement since the last inspection. Excellent links have been established with a wide range of external agencies.

The self-evaluation procedures are good and take account of the views of all those involved with the school, for example through surveys of parents' views. As a result, the school has an accurate view of its strengths and areas of weakness and has good capacity to improve in future. Senior staff undertake a systematic programme of monitoring of teaching and learning and use this information well to help develop the skills of staff. Subject leaders make a very positive contribution to ensuring that improvements take place. Governors are very supportive. They are involved in setting priorities for development and helping to resolve issues that arise, such as recent problems with parking. As part of its review of its assessment procedures, the school is gathering more data about students' progress. This should help governors to ask more searching questions about the progress students make, in order to check on the overall effectiveness of the school and support its further improvement.

Resources are good and the outside accommodation has been developed well to support students' learning. The accommodation in the main building is only adequate but it is managed well to meet the students' needs.

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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	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	Yes
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	
The behaviour of learners	2	
The attendance of learners	2	
How well learners enjoy their education	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2	1
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2	2

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

<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	Yes
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	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**

Students

Thank you for all the help you gave us when we visited your school on the 13 June for the inspection. You helped us get a view about how much your school is doing to help you.

It is clear that Priory School is a good school that cares for you very well indeed. We could see how well it helped you reach your targets and that you are learning to do more and more things for yourselves. You learn to use pictures and signs well, and also you learn to count well. You told us how much you enjoy doing things like games, particularly basketball, and you are happy to turn to your teachers if you need help.

The school is particularly effective in helping you develop the skills that you will need in the next stage of your education. Those of you in the sixth form are very helpful in organising events such as the 'Leavers' Disco'. Your teachers are working hard to improve the ways in which they make sure that everyone is always doing their very best in lessons. Teachers are collecting more data about the progress you make and this will help your governors to ask more searching questions about how the good the school is.

Yours sincerely

Kay Charlton

Lead Inspector