

Priestthorpe Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107257
Local Authority	Bradford
Inspection number	287765
Inspection dates	18–19 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Anna Dawson

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	243
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr J Meer
Headteacher	Mrs Kathryn Spragg
Date of previous school inspection	27 May 2002
School address	Mornington Road Bingley West Yorkshire BD16 4JS
Telephone number	01274 564879
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This average sized primary school, which includes a Nursery, serves a mixed area with broadly average social and economic characteristics. The school has extended services for parents including a holiday play scheme and a breakfast club. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is just above average. There is an average proportion of pupils identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Nearly all pupils on roll are of White British heritage. There has been a change of headship since the last inspection.

The school has achieved the ActiveMark, the ArtsMark and a National Healthy Schools Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school with outstanding features, such as an excellent curriculum and the quality of care and support it provides for pupils. The school is fully inclusive and this is reflected in the outstanding progress made by pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Since the last inspection, when the school was judged to be satisfactory, there has been significant improvement in all aspects of provision because of the exceptional leadership of the headteacher. The school serves its community very well and is held in very high regard by the parents and thought of as a school that 'is on the up'. Consequently, it is currently oversubscribed. Partnership with parents and other schools is outstanding. Parents are exceptionally positive about all aspects of the school's work. In the words of one parent, 'every child matters in this school not just academically but socially and emotionally'.

The pupils achieve so well partly because they enjoy the excellent interesting and relevant curriculum. Pupils participate in a wide range of school activities, which enriches their learning. The effectively planned themes and topics, especially the creative arts, are a strength. These inspire and motivate pupils to develop their thinking and social skills. Children get off to a flying start in the Nursery, learning rapidly, exploring the exciting environment and benefiting from skilled teaching. By the end of their Reception year, the children have made very good progress and many attain or exceed the expected learning goals. From Years 1 to 6 children build on this first-rate foundation to achieve well overall and at times exceptionally well. For instance, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve very well because of the high quality support they receive. Pupils have achieved outstandingly well in writing this year and standards are at an all time high as a result of exceptional teaching. The school has recently focused on writing as an area for development.

The quality of teaching is good overall and sometimes outstanding. As a result pupils make good and sometimes excellent progress. However there is some variation in performance and progress between year groups. For example, progress in writing this year is excellent but achievement for some of the younger more able pupils could achieve more in reading. By the end of Year 6, pupils generally attain above average standards in English, mathematics and science. However, standards overall are likely to be lower this year because nearly one quarter of the current Year 6 class has learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The quality of assessment is outstanding in the Foundation Stage and elsewhere in the school it is generally good. Teachers set personal targets for pupils and mark work conscientiously. In some cases the written advice to pupils and discussion about their targets for improvement is exemplary. However, not all marking or discussion is yet of this very high standard and some pupils still need more guidance to help them improve.

Pupils' personal and social skills develop outstandingly well because staff provide them with great care and support. Pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development is excellent. Most develop a mature and responsible approach to life. They have a very good understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle and stay safe. They are well prepared for their next phase of education.

Leadership and management are good overall. The committed senior leadership team is supported by a dedicated staff that together have significant strengths and outstanding capacity to improve the school still further. The systems for checking on the quality of teaching and learning are generally good but not yet sufficiently rigorous to ensure all aspects of teaching

are brought up to the highest standards. There is an exceptionally effective governing body supporting and shaping the direction of the school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in reading further for some of the more able younger pupils.
- Ensure that all pupils are given the guidance they need to help them improve their work.
- Develop more rigorous systems to check and raise the quality of teaching and learning to the highest standard.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children get off to a terrific start in the Nursery as a result of the outstanding provision. There is a wide variation in children's skills on entry. Most enter the Nursery with broadly average abilities but a significant minority are below average. The outstanding teaching and exciting and stimulating activities children enjoy result in rapid learning and very good achievement by the end of Reception. In Years 1 to 6, there are some variations in progress between year groups but pupils make good and sometimes outstanding, progress overall to leave Year 6 with standards in English, mathematics and science that are generally above average. Pupils' achievement in writing, where significant progress has been made this year, is exceptional. However, by the end of Year 2, standards in reading, although improved this year, could be higher for some of the more able pupils. The inclusive nature of the school is evident in the sensitive way provision is matched to help all achieve equally well from the most vulnerable to the gifted and talented. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make exceptionally good progress.

Within the last two years the school has met and exceeded its targets. There is an improving trend of pupils' achievement. The variations between year groups, however, cause fluctuations in national test results. For example, standards overall in the present Year 6 are likely to be lower than last year because there is a greater proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. In other subjects, for example drama and art, examples of high quality work were seen during the inspection.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. Their attendance levels are above average. Pupils are very positive about school, as are their parents. A typical parental comment is, 'Priestthorpe does a fantastic job of bringing out the best in everyone.'

Pupils develop excellent relationships with staff and each other. For example, older pupils are encouraged to apply for the post of play leaders to look after younger pupils at lunchtimes and regard this as an important responsibility.

Behaviour both in lessons and around school is good and pupils feel happy and secure. They have a good awareness of personal safety. There are plenty of opportunities for pupils to have a say in the development of the school. Members of the school council take their roles very seriously and have a clear understanding of how good their school is and what can be improved.

The pupils know the importance of a healthy diet and regular exercise and put this into practice at break times and by participating in a variety of sporting activities. Their positive attitude towards school prepares them well for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good with outstanding features. In the Foundation Stage, the quality of teaching and learning is excellent. In Years 1 to 6 teaching is good and sometimes outstanding. The outstanding teaching is exciting, motivating and challenges pupils to learn through creatively planned themes and topics. Good management of behaviour and a variety of different methods such as role-play and group work keep pupils focused and on task. However, at times, even in the good lessons, the pace of learning could be faster to challenge pupils further. Pupils' recorded work is overall of good quality. However, the presentation of it does not always match its overall quality.

Assessment is good overall with some outstanding examples. For instance, staff assess children in the Foundation Stage rigorously so that the planned enjoyable activities challenge the children to make maximum progress. There is some exceptionally good quality marking in writing, with well thought out comments. This has helped to raise pupils' achievement. In other subjects marking does not always ensure that pupils understand their next learning steps. Although many pupils know and understand their targets, some pupils do not remember them or understand how to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum offered to pupils is outstanding. Right from the start children in the Foundation Stage enjoy a vibrant, extremely well-planned curriculum. There is a strong emphasis on developing pupils' skills through a creative and enriched approach. Children speak with enthusiasm about the interesting and exciting activities offered. In the words of the chair of governors, 'Children love coming to school, which is successful in providing a wide ranging education.' This is evident in the awards the school has gained in sport, art and health. A particularly effective feature of the curriculum is the way the staff make clear links between subjects and organise themed projects to explore cross-curricular topics. This promotes pupils' understanding, thinking skills and adds to their enjoyment of school. A rich and varied programme of visits and visitors, including work with the 'Take One Picture Project', extends learning very effectively through first-hand experiences that stimulate pupils' imaginations. The school has developed strong partnerships with local schools and makes good use of specialist teachers, particularly in French, music and through sports coaching. There is a popular school choir and the orchestra supports the development of more musically talented pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school takes outstanding care of its pupils. This extends beyond the school day to include the Breakfast Club. Pupils have confidence in staff and procedures for dealing with their concerns: they know that help is always available if requested. Relationships with parents and outside agencies are strong. This helps the school to cater for the needs of individual pupils

and to recruit parents for popular courses, which help them become more involved in their children's learning. These activities are greatly enhanced through the role of the Parent Involvement Worker. Child protection and safeguarding procedures are in place and assessments of any risks to safety are conducted regularly. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are given excellent support helping them to achieve their targets. They are included in all aspects of school life. The provision made to support the transfer of pupils to local high schools is good. There are very well developed procedures for settling children into the Nursery and their transfer to Reception and Year 1. Consequently, this helps children to thrive and learn rapidly.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership of the headteacher is outstanding. A successful commitment to inclusion is evident in pupils' academic performance and personal development. This is underpinned by a creative and stimulating learning environment and justifies the school's successful and growing reputation within the community. The school improvement plan provides a clear picture of the school's strengths and areas for development. Because the school has good systems to track pupils' progress, very effective intervention programmes ensure that all pupils succeed. The enthusiastic senior leadership team know what needs to be done and has been instrumental in raising standards, particularly by providing examples of effective teaching.

Senior leaders recognised that there was more work to do to raise standards for some of the most able younger pupils in Key Stage 1 and as a consequence standards have improved this year. However there is still more to be done to raise standards further. Participation in the active local network of schools has promoted professional development that has aided school improvement, for instance in literacy and numeracy. Procedures for checking the effectiveness of provision are effective but feedback is not sufficiently detailed to raise the good teaching to outstanding. Senior leaders have a generally accurate, although occasionally over generous, view of the school's performance. Self-evaluation is successfully shared with pupils, staff, parents and governors. Their views are taken into account and acted upon. The quality of governance is outstanding. Governors are astute and extremely supportive, acting as critical friends in holding the school to account.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall
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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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

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

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

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you very much for making the inspectors welcome in your school. It really was a pleasure to walk around the school, join you in lessons and speak to you, some of your parents and people who work at school. At the end of my visit I came to the conclusion that you attend a good school, which has outstanding aspects and is improving all the time. The school staff care for you so well and you told me how much you enjoy your lessons.

You sensibly take part in lots of exercise and choose healthy snacks at break. I think you participate in an exceptionally good range of visits and out of school activities and enjoy the interesting and exciting opportunities that you have to help you learn. This is because your teachers work so hard and they will continue to help you. Of course, you play a very important part in helping the school to improve by your work and the responsible way you get involved in school life. I agree with your teachers that you have improved the quality of your writing this year because you have clear targets to work towards and get lots of help to improve. I enjoyed reading some of your lovely stories. Sometimes, however, I had difficulty in making out some of your words because they were not clearly written. I think you can work a little harder at making your work neater in all your workbooks so you can be proud to show them off. I also know some of the younger pupils could do even better in reading. There are so many interesting books for you to enjoy reading at school. I noticed that some of you don't know your personal targets very well and do not understand precisely what you have to do to improve. I have asked your teachers to help by always giving you clear instructions so you understand how to get better. You know that if you do not understand you can always ask!

I am sure you will continue to work hard and enjoy school. Just do that little bit better and you will help your school to improve even more.