



# Priory Junior School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 122531  
**Local Authority** NOTTINGHAMSHIRE  
**Inspection number** 292426  
**Inspection dates** 31 January –1 February 2007  
**Reporting inspector** Michael Best

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Junior	<b>School address</b>	Priory Road
<b>School category</b>	Community		Gedling, Gedling
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11		Nottingham NG4 7LE
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	0115 9526100
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	200	<b>Fax number</b>	0115 9526500
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Anne Baldry
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Judith Wilkin
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	20 January 2003		

<b>Age group</b> 7–11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 31 January –1 February 2007	<b>Inspection number</b> 292426
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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

The school is smaller in size than most primary schools. It serves an established area of privately owned and rented homes in a former coal mining area on the outskirts of Nottingham. The prosperity of the area is broadly average. Most pupils transfer from the nearby infant school where they reach generally above average standards in their end of Year 2 assessments. Pupil mobility is below average.

The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is lower than in most other schools. The number of pupils who have a statement of special educational need (SEN), is below the national average. The proportions of pupils whose home language is not English or who are from minority ethnic groups are below national averages.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Inspectors agree with the school that its overall effectiveness is satisfactory. The school is improving because new procedures for assessing and tracking pupils' progress are raising teachers' expectations and improving standards. The school's leaders and governors share a secure vision for the development of the school which is clearly focused on promoting pupils' personal development and well-being, and improving standards. The school's plans for its future are in line with national priorities. Although these and other developments, particularly in forging meaningful links between subjects, have helped to raise standards overall in the last three years, their general impact has been satisfactory rather than good. Achievement is satisfactory. This is because the school's analysis of the information available about pupils' progress has not been rigorous enough in identifying how to improve and maintain their achievement. Analysis of 2006 statutory test papers indicated weaknesses in pupils' scientific enquiry and thinking skills, and their interpretation of written problems. With improved information now available to managers and staff, the school has increased the targets for pupils to reach in the statutory tests in 2007 and 2008. The actions taken to improve teaching are starting to show through in pupils' work and indicate an upturn in pupils' achievement. The school provides satisfactory value for money and has a satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

Inspection evidence confirms the positive impact of teachers' and learners' efforts to raise standards in the present Year 6 group. Teachers' latest assessments of pupils' work indicate that standards of work are generally above average. Pupils are now making at least satisfactory and often good progress because teachers are providing them with greater challenge. The increased emphasis on developing the use and application of skills and knowledge is evident in pupils' increased confidence in approaching problem-solving situations. Pupils' success and enjoyment of learning is reflected in their sustained attention in lessons, considerate behaviour and good attendance.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers have improved their identification and monitoring of those pupils needing specific support to reach and maintain a higher standard in their work. Their marking of pupils' work lacks consistency. Pupils know their targets for improvement but some are unsure of what these targets mean or what they need to do to improve. The curriculum is satisfactory. The school's good provision for extra-curricular activities is well supported by pupils who make good gains in their fitness and team skills. Recent well-conceived improvements, including the promotion of scientific reasoning and thinking skills, are yet to be fully embedded. Pupils make satisfactory progress in developing the skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being. Pastoral care is good. Pupils successfully learn about keeping safe and develop a good understanding of healthy lifestyles.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Raise pupils' achievement by improving their application of skills, knowledge and understanding, particularly in scientific enquiry.

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning, in particular by ensuring that pupils are fully aware of what they need to do to improve their work.
- Embed the school's procedures for assessing and tracking pupils' progress to ensure that all pupils, and especially those with the capacity to reach the higher levels, make the best possible progress as they move through the school.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Overall, standards have risen since the last inspection and were above average in 2004 and 2005. In 2006, standards at the end of Year 6 were broadly average. When these pupils were tested and assessed at the end of Year 2, their standards were broadly average; fewer pupils than usual reached the higher levels, particularly in writing and science. Overall, achievement was broadly satisfactory in 2004 and 2005. In 2006, it was broadly satisfactory in English and mathematics and the school's targets were met. However, achievement was lower in science for, although nearly all pupils reached the expected national standard, too few gained the higher level. Analysis of papers indicates that pupils lost valuable marks on questions that required extended answers, particularly those involving more complex comprehension, reasoning and thinking skills. The school has changed the way in which it teaches these skills and that is why standards are now improving. Overall, the differences in standards between boys and girls in 2006 were not significant but many boys did not make consistently good enough progress from when they joined the school.

The current position indicates that the school's targets are challenging but achievable. Standards in English are slightly ahead of those in mathematics and science. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and those at the early stages of learning English as an additional language, make satisfactory progress.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They benefit from many opportunities to pause and reflect, as shown in their thoughtful writing about their 'dream world'. Through writing and discussions, pupils have a good and growing understanding of their feelings. Pupils' behaviour is good. Their attendance has improved since the previous inspection and is above average. They respect the views and opinions of others and work well with each other.

Pupils make good progress in developing the personal qualities that will enable them to contribute to the community, notably through the School Council, which supports effective links with pupils in different classes, and by caring for one another in the playground as 'buddies' to the younger pupils. Pupils value their involvement in sporting activities and enjoy the healthy snacks and lunches the school provides.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The proportion of good teaching is improving because teachers' expectations are rising. Relationships between staff and pupils are good, and teaching assistants provide good support for pupils. Pupils say they 'really enjoy' and 'learn a lot' in lessons where they are actively involved in contributing ideas, showing initiative and explaining their reasoning. Teachers manage lessons well but occasionally the pace of learning slows when teachers' explanations and instructions are too complex, and pupils need to ask for clarification. Although the marking of pupils' work is regular and there are some good examples evident, teachers' highlighting of what individual pupils need to do to improve their work is not consistent.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

Pupils appreciate the way the school brings the curriculum to life, particularly the residential visits that foster team-work and visits to places of interest. The curriculum for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well matched to their needs, though the school is not consistently responsive to the different needs of boys and girls from year to year. The school's programme for personal, social and health education, and citizenship, is good and successfully promotes pupils' personal development, particularly through the many opportunities for them to contribute to, and take responsibilities in, the community.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 3

Overall, the school provides satisfactory care, guidance and support for its pupils. Staff are highly committed to promoting pupils' health and safety. Child protection arrangements are robust and meet current requirements and risk assessments are carefully attended to. However, in this safe and caring environment, learners do not always reach challenging targets. The systems that the school has recently put in place to check on pupils' progress are fit for purpose but their impact is not yet reflected in statutory results. Teachers give pupils targets for what they need to learn next, though some pupils do not have a clear understanding of what they mean. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive good support. One parent wrote: 'When I approached the school regarding personal matters impacting on my child's well-being I always found all staff very approachable and supportive.'

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

The impact of leadership and management is satisfactory. The headteacher promotes a strong team spirit. Staff and governors work well together and give high priority to pupils' pastoral care. Subject leaders know the strengths and shortcomings in their subject areas but shortcomings in assessment and tracking systems have reduced the impact of the school's efforts in monitoring and evaluating provision and outcomes. Recent developments have provided the missing link in the chain for raising standards and improved the school's capacity to support individual pupils, particularly those with the capability to reach the higher levels.

Parents are supportive of the school and speak well of the help they and their children receive from staff. Links with partner schools and other agencies are satisfactory overall. There are good arrangements for easing the transition of pupils to high school. Induction arrangements for pupils transferring into Year 3 are satisfactory. Day-to-day routines are well established. Administrative staff provide good support and the caretaker and his team maintain the premises to a high standard. Resources are of good quality and well-used by staff and pupils. Suitable financial procedures are in place. The governance of the school is satisfactory. Governors are working to develop their role as the school's critical friend. Regular visits by the chair of governors, and the recent involvement of other governors in working on policy reviews in school, are helping to inform their first-hand understanding of the school's work.

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## Inspection judgements

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

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

### The quality of provision

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

<sup>1</sup> 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.

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

6 February 2007

Dear Pupils

Priory Junior School, Priory Road, Gedling, Nottingham NG4 7LE

Thank you very much for making us so welcome when we visited your school last week. We enjoyed hearing what you had to say about the school and your work. We are pleased that you enjoy school, work hard and want to do well. We're particularly pleased that you like to be fully involved in lessons so that you can think through and try out your ideas. You are right in saying that the staff take good care of you and that there plenty of opportunities to take part in sporting and other activities. We were delighted to hear how much you enjoy the residential and other visits the school organises.

We are pleased to see improvements in the standards of your work and in the progress you make. We liked the way you were finding out about keeping a running total of measurements in Year 3 and how you were using your imagination in your science-fiction writing in Year 5. Your teachers have improved the way in which they check on how well you are getting on with your work. This means they now have a better idea of what you need to do to improve. We think there's still quite a bit of work for teachers to do to get used to these new systems and to ensure that all pupils do their best. We are pleased that your teachers give you targets for improvement but we would like them to make sure that you have a better understanding of exactly what you need to do to reach these. We judge that the teachers are right to give you more opportunities to use and apply the things you already know and can do to solve problems. This is especially important to help you reach the higher standards and we suggest that they find further ways to do this in your lessons.

We congratulate you on your good behaviour, politeness and good attendance. You and your teachers get on well. All these are important ingredients in a recipe for improvement. Keep working hard and enjoying school.

Yours truly

Mike Best

Lead Inspector