



Priory CofE Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 132240
Local Authority Stoke-On-Trent
Inspection number 293998
Inspection dates 6–7 March 2007
Reporting inspector Helen Barter

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

The inspection of the day care was carried out under Children Act 1989: Part XA (as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000) and, where (funded) nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

Type of school	Primary	School address	Jubilee Road
School category	Voluntary controlled		Trentham
Age range of pupils	3–11		Stoke-on-Trent ST4 8EF
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01782 233585
Number on roll (school)	349	Fax number	01782 235725
Number on roll (day care)	69		
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Nigel Di Castiglione
		Headteacher	Richard Woollacott
Date of previous school inspection	24 February 2003		
Date of previous day care inspection	20 December 2004		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
3–11	6–7 March 2007	293998

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by four Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The pupils attending this large primary school have wide-ranging social backgrounds. The proportion of pupils entitled to claim free school meals is average. Most pupils are of White British heritage. There are small groups from a range of other ethnic backgrounds, nearly all of whom are fluent in English. The school roll has increased by 25% in the last four years, with significant numbers entering the school in 2004 and 2005. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities has increased since the previous inspection and is now above average. Pupils' attainment on entry is broadly average.

The Link Club, open for 50 weeks a year, provides registered day care through a breakfast club, after-school club and holiday play-scheme.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

'Children at this school have a great sense of belonging and are inspired to do well, try new things and not dwell on failure.' This typical comment from a parent reflects a school which strives to provide an all-round education for its pupils. Since opening in 2000, it has developed outstanding partnerships with a wide range of different groups in the local and wider community. The school is extremely popular with parents, who are tremendously supportive and very happy with their children's education.

While it has many strengths, the overall effectiveness of the school is currently satisfactory. This is because standards and pupils' achievement are only now recovering after a decline during the period of the school's rapid growth. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory, although the more able and talented need to be better challenged if this is to improve. Pupils are now making good progress in Year 6, where standards are broadly average and rising, but pockets of slower learning mean that progress is satisfactory across the school as a whole. More pupils are attaining the higher levels in Year 6 than in 2006 and they are on track to meet their challenging targets. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities achieve well because they are well supported in lessons and groups.

Good leadership and management have been the key to putting the school firmly back on an even keel. Senior leaders have taken decisive and effective action to improve pupils' achievement. There is strong determination and good capacity to ensure that this continues. Systematic procedures have been developed to monitor and track pupils' progress. Information gained has been used effectively to target, through support and intervention groups, most of the pupils who were underachieving. The newly developed 'faculty groups' are led and managed well by the leaders of English, mathematics and science. There is scope within these groups to develop the skills of less experienced staff so that they better understand how well the school is performing.

Accurate self-evaluation leads the school to know that it needs to improve the satisfactory quality of teaching and learning if pupils are to achieve well in all year groups. Pupils make good progress where work is well planned for their different abilities and they are challenged to work at a higher level. Progress is uneven because this good practice is not consistent in all classes. Foundation Stage children (Nursery and Reception) progress well because the provision is well led and managed, teaching is good and the curriculum is very well planned to help children meet their goals.

The school's good curriculum and good care, guidance and support, combined with extremely rich learning experiences beyond the classroom, result in pupils' outstanding personal development and well-being. Pupils love their school and do it and themselves credit through their exemplary behaviour. One parent's comment that her child 'really enjoys getting up for school in the morning' typifies many others made. This enjoyment is evident when pupils speak excitedly about activities such as taking part in a lantern parade to promote the regeneration of the local park and exhibiting their work with local artists.

What the school should do to improve further

- Share the good practice in teaching so that all pupils make good progress from year to year and reach higher standards by the time they leave.
- Build on the systems for tracking pupils' progress to ensure that all pupils, particularly the more able and talented, do as well as they can.
- Foster the leadership and management skills of staff within the faculty groups to increase their understanding of how well the school is performing.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The good start made by children in the Foundation Stage enables virtually all to reach or exceed the standards expected by the time they start in Year 1. Their literacy, numeracy, personal and social skills are good. In Years 1 and 2, pupils achieve satisfactorily and reach standards which are broadly average.

Pupils reach standards which are broadly average in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 6. Test data show a trend of declining standards over the last three years, with pupils, particularly the more able, not achieving as well as they should. The school has stopped this decline in its tracks by thoroughly analysing and tracking pupils' achievement at all levels of ability. It has set realistic, but challenging, targets and used focused interventions such as Springboard and the Better Reading Programme to drive achievement forward. Pupils in Year 6 are now making good progress, current standards are at least average and more pupils are reaching the higher levels. Rigorous monitoring of planning by senior leaders is being used effectively to target support for teaching to iron out the uneven progress in some year groups. They know there is still work to be done to ensure that the more able and talented pupils consistently receive work which challenges them. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, and the few pupils at the early stages of learning English, achieve well in all years because thorough assessment of their learning leads to well-targeted support.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' outstanding personal development and well-being make the school a very happy place to be for everyone. 'School is fun, wonderful, fantastic, and helps you learn' are the sorts of things that pupils say. They greatly enjoy school life, participate well in everything on offer and attend well. Parents greatly value the way that their children are helped to develop and typically describe them as 'happy, content and eager to learn.' Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They have striking self-confidence because they feel extremely safe and valued. They clearly know the difference between right and wrong and their behaviour is exemplary. Pupils play well together and understand very well that bullying and racist remarks are not acceptable. They have very good cultural awareness and are proud of the work they do to help children in a Ugandan school. They have an excellent knowledge of

how to look after their bodies by eating healthily and participating regularly in exercise. Many pupils choose to cycle to school and do so safely through the 'Bike-It' programme. Pupils have an exceptionally strong community spirit. Through their school and eco councils, pupils help their school and local environment a great deal. They are maturing into sensible and responsible young people who, with their satisfactory basic skills, are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Consistently good teaching in the Foundation Stage results in children achieving well. Children benefit from well-planned, high quality activities, for example, opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills in the Priory Vet role- play area. Adults are excellent role models and work as a strong team because they all have a good understanding of how young children learn.

In Years 1 to 6, teaching is satisfactory. In all classes, teachers relate well to pupils and set clear expectations for their behaviour. Teaching assistants give good support and are instrumental in helping pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities to achieve well. Imaginative displays around the school support learning well. Pupils enjoy lessons most when learning is brought to life and made 'fun'. Pupils made good progress in a Year 6 lesson where the teacher dressed as a 'mad scientist', because their interest was engaged from the start. Brisk pace and good balance between teacher input and pupil activity helps pupils to progress well in most, but not all, classes. More-able pupils do not always make as much progress as they should because the activities planned do not stretch them enough. Teachers' marking is positive but there is scope to challenge pupils more so that they move forward faster in their learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good curriculum makes a considerable contribution to pupils' outstanding personal development. Pupils' lives and enjoyment of school are greatly enriched by participation in additional activities in sport, art, music and drama. The personal, social, citizenship and health education curriculum helps pupils to develop healthy and safe lifestyles. Opportunities to produce the school newspaper and run an anti-bullying campaign help pupils to make a difference to their school community. Changes to the curriculum to provide 'booster' and 'target' groups are helping to raise standards in literacy and numeracy and improve achievement. Activities to extend more-able pupils' learning are developing well but the full impact is not yet seen in the classroom, where there is still scope to raise these pupils' achievement. The effective use of the accommodation to match the areas of learning is a good feature of the Foundation Stage curriculum. Exciting activities make children want to learn. The outdoor area is used well to support children's learning, with plans to develop it further.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Excellent pastoral care, including good procedures to protect the most vulnerable, helps pupils to feel extremely safe and happy. Parents value the care provided highly. Many comment that teachers 'go the extra mile' to help children and parents. Pupils are confident that they will always get help if they have a problem because they have strong relationships with adults. One of the reasons that pupils feel safe is because they know that any incidents of bullying are quickly dealt with. Pupils are provided with good academic guidance. Those with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress because the provision for them is well planned and they receive good support in class and in groups. The nurture group is an outstanding feature of the support provided for the youngest pupils who need extra help with literacy and numeracy. While pupils say that targets help them to improve their work, not all are confident about exactly what it is they need to do next to move their learning on.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Good leadership and management have been vital to the establishment of the school and, most importantly, its ability to take effective action to reverse a decline in pupils' achievement during a period of significant change. Parents show no concern about the slip in standards and highly commend the school's positive ethos, which they say 'has come on in leaps and bounds' under the leadership of the headteacher. Along with his deputy, he inspires respect, commitment and enthusiasm from staff and is developing an effective team approach through the 'faculty groups'. While relatively new, this more collaborative style of leadership and management gives good scope for senior leaders to share their expertise, and for less experienced staff to develop their monitoring and evaluation skills across all areas of the school's work. Resources are deployed well, particularly with regard to the provision of support and intervention strategies, which are helping to improve achievement. Governors are strongly supportive of the school and sufficiently well informed to hold it to account for its performance. As a result of accurate self-evaluation, the school has pinpointed the right priorities for further improvement and has good capacity to bring these about.

Effectiveness of registered day care

Grade: 2

The Link Club provides a good standard of care for all its users. This is an improvement since the club was last inspected. All the 14 statutory National Standards are met. Staff are well qualified and knowledgeable in the care of young people and all have been checked and judged to be suitable to work with young children in accordance with government legislation. There is adequate indoor space and the premises are bright and airy but soft seating and storage space are both minimal. The club is well organised, led and managed. All documentation is thorough and maintained to a high

standard, for example attendance registers, accidents, behaviour, and medical records. There is good liaison with parents including with those whose children have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The opening hours of the club support parents and families very well indeed in enabling them to follow their chosen work and study paths and parents are very appreciative of this. There are well-established routines and consistently high expectations of behaviour so that an orderly and safe environment exists. Supervision is good at all times. Good reward systems encourage children to do their best. Staff are interested in the children they care for and are kind towards them and so good relationships are a strong feature here. Consequently children feel well cared for, fairly treated, comfortable and secure. As a result of all of this, children clearly enjoy their time in the club and achieve high standards of behaviour, social skills, and self-confidence. However, children's independence is hampered somewhat by them not being involved in the preparation of their own snacks. Children's health is adequately provided for with strengths in practices that promote personal and food hygiene. However, large play equipment is limited, as is outdoor space, especially in inclement weather, and this restricts activities to promote children's physical well-being and development. Some of the play equipment is not as well maintained as it could be.

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints about the registered day care that required Ofsted or the school to take action so that the day care continued to meet the National Standards. The school is required to keep a record of complaints about the registered day care made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints about the registered day care other than those made to Ofsted.

Recommendations or actions to improve the registered day care

- Ensure sufficient large play equipment is provided and reintroduce the use of the covered play area to better promote the physical development of all children (even in inclement weather).
- Further promote independence by allowing older children to prepare their own food where appropriate.
- Ensure soft seating is provided and that play equipment is kept in good repair so as to add to children's enjoyment.
- Improve the storage facilities.

Inspection judgements

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

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ 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	2

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	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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.

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	3
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	2
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

The effectiveness of the registered day care

The quality and standards of the registered day care	2
How effective is the day care in helping children to be healthy?	3
How effective is the day care in protecting children and helping them to stay safe?	2
How effective is the day care in helping children to achieve and enjoy their learning?	2
How effective is the day care in helping children to make a positive contribution?	2
How effectively is the day care organised?	2
Does the day care meet the needs of the range of children for whom it provides?	Yes
Has the day care improved since the last inspection?	Yes
Does the day care require enforcement action?	No
Does the day care require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for being so helpful and talking to the inspectors about your work when we came to visit. I would really like to thank the school council for inviting me to lunch and telling me about everything you do.

Your school is providing you with a satisfactory standard of education and there are some things which it does particularly well. Here is what we found.

- During the time you are at school, you make the progress that is expected of you and reach average standards.
- Children in the Nursery and Reception classes learn well because teachers plan lots of exciting activities for them.
- You are growing up to be really sensible, caring and responsible young people. Your behaviour is excellent and you get on really well with each other. Well done!
- You learn lots of interesting things at school and not just in lessons. Many of you are fit and healthy because you enjoy sport and cycling. Your choir are super singers too!
- All of the teachers care very much about you and make sure you are kept safe and well in school. We could see how much you enjoy coming to school every day.
- Your teachers make sure that your school runs well and have worked hard to make sure you learn as you should. Your parents wrote lots of letters and told us how pleased they are with the school.

The school has been looking very closely at how well you are learning to decide what it needs to do next. To help them, we have asked them to do the following things.

- Make sure that you learn equally well in every class so that you reach even higher standards by the time you leave.
- Keep checking on how well you are doing so that all of you, particularly those who find work easy, do as well as you possibly can.
- Help teachers to become even better at looking at how well the school is doing.