



Priory School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 110089
Local Authority Slough
Inspection number 298254
Inspection dates 10–11 January 2007
Reporting inspector Anne Wellham HMI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Orchard Avenue
School category	Foundation		Slough
Age range of pupils	3–11		SL1 6HE
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01628 600300
Number on roll (school)	753	Fax number	01628 666917
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs A Thomas
		Headteacher	Mrs J Laver
Date of previous school inspection	9 October 2000		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
3–11	10–11 January 2007	298254

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors led by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Description of the school

Priory is a larger than average primary school. The school has a nursery, a resource unit for pupils with physical, medical and sensory difficulties and a resource unit for pupils with very complex behavioural, social and emotional needs. The school serves a mixed catchment area. The percentage of children with English as an additional language and from minority ethnic groups is higher than the national average. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is below average overall. About 5 percent of pupils have statements of special educational needs which is higher than the national average due to the resource units. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. The school has training status for initial training of teachers and a number of awards for Artsmark, Basic Skills, Eco schools and Healthy Schools.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Priory is a good school with some outstanding features. 'We feel lucky that our little boy is in such a fantastic school'. This is reflected in the views of the vast majority of parents. The visionary leadership of the headteacher inspires all staff, pupils and parents to live up to their motto of 'The children come first'.

Standards are high. Children in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 achieve well and pupils leave school at the end of Key Stage 2 with national test results that are above the national average. All groups of pupils make good overall progress in relation to their starting points, although pupils' progress in mathematics at Key Stage 2 is well below what is expected of them. The school is working hard to raise further achievement in all core subjects and tackle underachievement in mathematics.

The school works with over 50 creative partners to deliver the creative learning curriculum. This innovative approach to teaching the foundation subjects is outstanding and helps pupils reach excellent standards in their work as well making a significant contribution to their personal and social development. Pupils' engagement and enjoyment of lessons, their excellent behaviour and attitudes to learning and the commitment and dedication of their teachers make this a very happy school. Visitors are consistent in their praise of the impressive learning environment. The corridors and classrooms are full of vibrant and colourful displays of pupils' achievements.

Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and those with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties in The Tree House, Physical Resource Unit and those receiving Conductive Education is outstanding. Good teaching, plus outstanding care in both units develop pupils self belief and independence and support successful integration and reintegration into mainstream classes.

Teaching and learning are good across all phases. Pupils are supported in their learning by a wide range of additional adults employed in the school and from outside agencies. Teachers and the wider workforce are well managed and developed by robust performance management and broad ranging opportunities for continuing professional development. Careful monitoring of lessons and pupils' work by the senior managers has led to consistency in planning and delivery. The school rightly identifies that the use of assessment data to set targets to track the achievement of individual pupils and to inform planning to meet the different needs of learners is needed to tackle the underachievement in mathematics.

Pupils contribute enthusiastically to school life and their community. They are developing useful skills to help them as adults and are aware of the benefits of a healthy lifestyle. Parents and pupils value the efforts the school make to keep everyone safe summed up by a parent's comment 'The school has tackled the issue of bullying in a head on fashion. This I feel has helped my daughter to feel that if she was ever bullied she would be listened to and the bullying would stop'.

The school strives for continual improvement and whilst celebrating its achievements since the last inspection recognises its capacity for further development.

What the school should do to improve further

- Analyse and use assessment information consistently to set targets and track the progress of individual pupils.
- Use assessment information effectively to plan learning that meets the needs of pupils with different abilities.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are good. Children achieve well in the Foundation Stage. By the time they reach the end of Year 2 pupils have reached standards in English, mathematics and science which are above average. Results of national tests in Year 6 show that these standards are maintained. Pupils' overall achievement at the end of Key Stage 2 in relation to their prior attainment at Key Stage 1 is average. Pupils do not progress in mathematics as well as they do in English and science.

Children with learning difficulties and disabilities in the resource units receive well targeted support and make excellent progress. Teachers within the resource units make excellent use of assessment information to track individual pupil's progress. Planning and teaching then relates to pupil need, ensuring pupils flourish. Pupils with learning difficulties in the main school progress at the same rate as other pupils.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. Classrooms are welcoming places where enthusiastic, attentive and well motivated pupils enjoy their learning.

Pupils demonstrate very good social skills and speak with confidence and assurance. There are high expectations of behaviour and manners and everyone is encouraged to respect and care for each other and the community. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and makes a significant contribution to pupils' personal development and well-being. They are encouraged to appreciate the views of others and respect the beliefs and values of other faiths and cultures. There are many opportunities for reflection in school and class assemblies and circle time as shown in a thought provoking display centred on the theme of Martin Luther King's 'I have a dream' speech in which the children are invited to express their dream for a better world. Pupils are encouraged to develop a healthy lifestyle through appropriate food choices at play and lunch times, their learning in PE and science and from life skills such as eating together as a family group.

Every pupil is valued. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds thrive in the school community and Gifted and Talented Pupils have opportunities to promote their skills in many ways such as the Chamber Choir which has had much success at the Eisteddfod. The Tree House Project, Conductive Education and the Resource Base offer a very wide range of opportunities to develop the personal skills of pupils with learning

difficulties and disabilities. Pupils make enthusiastic contributions to the life of the school, exemplified by the active school council, the buddies, ambassadors, prefects and house captains. Children enjoy developing the skills needed in the wider world, for example in Mr. McGregor's garden, where produce is grown and taken home or sold to staff.

Attendance is satisfactory overall with the majority of pupils wanting to come to school. One parent commented 'It is such a joy to wake up in the morning and your child is looking forward to going to school'.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Children achieve well and enjoy their lessons because of good teaching. Teachers in the Foundation Stage provide a wide range of well organised and carefully managed activities that meet the needs of children well. Teaching and learning in the Resource Bases is lively, inclusive and fun. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can do and give them interesting work. As a result pupils are enthusiastic learners eager to please their teachers and to participate in lessons. As a child remarked 'We do fun things in writing!' Teachers make good use of resources such as the interactive whiteboards to stimulate pupils' interest and to support pupils' learning. Relationships are very good and this contributes greatly to children's outstanding personal development. Teaching assistants contribute greatly to learning through the effective individual support they give to pupils. The school has identified that assessment information is not always used effectively in the classroom to plan for the different needs of all learners, particularly in mathematics. However, recently strategies have been introduced to bring about improvement.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding. The school has just cause to be proud of its innovative Creative Learning initiative which has a positive impact on learning and personal development throughout the school. Creative Partners bring a wide range of skills which benefit all year groups. High quality individual pupil booklets are an end product of the imaginative and vibrant teaching and learning that takes place. Stimulating displays create a superb learning environment.

Pupils participate enthusiastically in the broad range of after school activities, residential trips and visits which are available to them. The popular breakfast clubs where pupils improve their maths skills whilst having fun have successfully improved pupils self confidence and allowed them to develop positive attitudes to a subject perceived by many as difficult.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support is good overall with some examples of outstanding practice. The very positive relationships with parents and excellent levels of support from outside agencies based in the school, contribute significantly to pupils' individual welfare and parents' confidence in the school. The resource units provide excellent care and well targeted support and guidance for those pupils with complex learning needs. Systems to ensure pupil's health and safety are robust. Children feel secure and know who to approach if they are concerned. Inspectors did not agree with the school's judgement of this provision as outstanding because the guidance for academic progress is not as strong as pastoral care and support. Pupils are not given enough information to help them progress to meet achievement targets. Teachers are making increasingly effective use of assessment information to track pupils' progress but this information is not yet being used consistently to set challenging targets for all pupils. As a result some pupils are not clear about what they need to do next to improve their work, particularly able pupils in mathematics. Assessment procedures for early identification and close tracking of pupils' progress are stronger in the units than the main school. The two unit teams plus the Resource Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo) and support staff consistently review, maintain and improve assessment to set new targets and inform parents how they can support their child at home.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The senior leadership team is a stable, highly motivated group of managers led by the headteacher. They give the school a clear sense of direction which is based on an accurate analysis of its strengths and weaknesses. The school rightly identifies key priorities for strategic development notably to raise standards and achievement in the core subjects, particularly maths. An emphasis on high quality continuing professional development arising from thorough performance management procedures has resulted in a work force which is highly skilled and very committed. Performance is monitored and evaluated thoroughly by senior leaders and appropriate targets set for improvement. Resources and the learning environment are very well managed and staff are deployed very effectively to support pupils' learning.

The governing body has changed its composition in recent years to include a group of very committed parent governors. They have identified the skills and knowledge they can use in support of the school and have acquired a very good knowledge of the school's achievements and areas for development. They are working closely with senior leaders to improve it further. The school has made very good progress since it was last inspected particularly in furthering the personal development and well being of all its pupils and engaging them in an innovative and creative curriculum. Its capacity for further improvement is good.

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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?	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	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?	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	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	3
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?	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?	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	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
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

We were delighted to visit your school and I write to thank you for all your help and for making us feel so welcome. It was a pleasure to talk to so many of you and to look at your lovely work.

You are very happy at Priory and it was good to see how much you enjoy being at school. We think your school gives you a good education and that some things about it are outstanding. There are so many excellent things that it is hard for me to pick out the very best. However, these are what impressed the inspectors most:-

- you are extremely well behaved and polite and respect and care for each other
- you enjoy learning and reach high standards
- you have an exciting curriculum which makes lessons fun
- there are wonderful displays in the corridors and classrooms
- the Tree house, Conductive Education and Resource Unit are excellent and help the children to do their very best
- the staff take extremely good care of you and this helps you develop excellent attitudes to learning
- your parents are very pleased with the school and know how to help you at home
- your headteacher and senior leadership team leads the school well and knows what must be done to make it even better.

I have asked your teachers to:

- set you targets so that each of you knows what to do to achieve as well as you can
- make sure the work they ask you to do matches your different abilities.

Well done, and I wish you all the very best.

Anne Wellham, HMILead Inspector