

# Prior Weston Primary School and Children's Centre

## Inspection report

---

|                                |                   |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 100434            |
| <b>Local Authority</b>         | Islington         |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 307389            |
| <b>Inspection dates</b>        | 5–6 November 2008 |
| <b>Reporting inspector</b>     | Alison Storey HMI |

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

---

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Type of school</b>  | Primary   |
| <b>School category</b>   | Community   |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>   | 4–11  |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>  | Mixed   |
| <b>Number on roll</b>  |   |
| School (total)   | 320   |
| Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS | 79  |
| Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years                                     | 28  |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>   | The governing body  |
| <b>Chair</b>   | Mrs Barbara Riddell   |
| <b>Headteacher</b>   | Ms Mary Caven   |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>  | 25 April 2005   |
| <b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>                              | Not previously inspected  |
| <b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>   | Not previously inspected  |
| <b>School address</b>  | Golden Lane Campus<br>101 Whitecross Street<br>London<br>EC1Y 8JA |
| <b>Telephone number</b>  | 020 7786 4800   |

---

|                          |                   |
|--------------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Age group</b>         | 4–11              |
| <b>Inspection dates</b>  | 5–6 November 2008 |
| <b>Inspection number</b> | 307389            |

**Fax number**

020 7786 4801

|                          |                   |
|--------------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Age group</b>         | 4-11              |
| <b>Inspection dates</b>  | 5-6 November 2008 |
| <b>Inspection number</b> | 307389            |

---

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

Prior Weston is a larger than average primary school serving a culturally and socioeconomically diverse community. About half the pupils come from a range of minority ethnic groups; the main groups are those from Mixed backgrounds, White backgrounds other than British, and those of Black African heritage. Nearly one in five pupils speak English as an additional language. Turkish, Somali and French are most common; few are at an early stage of learning English. Nearly one quarter of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. One in four pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD), a proportion that is higher than the national average; most of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties, others have speech, language and communication or behavioural, social and emotional needs. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is higher than that seen nationally. In recent years, the number of pupils joining or leaving the school other than at normal times has been above average. It has fallen over time and last year was below average for the first time.

At the time of the last inspection, the school had recently enlarged by absorbing the children from a nearby school in Special Measures that had closed, and was in temporary accommodation. On 1 April 2008, the governing body took over responsibility for Fortune Park Children's Centre which is now registered as Golden Lane Children's Centre. All Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision is now made through the Centre. This includes childcare for children from age six months to five years, for 48 weeks a year. The school provides before school care for children from the end of EYFS to age 11. The school and the Children's Centre moved to the new purpose-built Golden Lane Campus at Easter 2008, which is shared with the primary department of Richard Cloudsley Special School and the Primary Care Trust.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Outwardly, Prior Weston has changed a lot since the last inspection, moving to impressive new premises and merging with the Children's Centre. Yet it has retained its ethos and is, as one parent said, 'in many ways a wonderful school: it is inclusive, teaches the importance of valuing individuals, turns out confident children'. Overall, inspectors found that while there are strengths, particularly in the provision for the children in EYFS and the care and support for pupils of all ages, Prior Weston is providing a satisfactory standard of education.

Pupils are very well cared for across the school. Staff know them as individuals and work effectively within school and with others to meet their needs. Consequently, pupils' personal development and well-being are strengths. Behaviour has improved significantly since the last inspection and is now good. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning, are sensible as they move around school and mature in their relationships and at play. Older pupils respond well to opportunities to take responsibility, for example as servers for the family-style lunch arrangements, helping in the Children's Centre or working with pupils from the special school. As tour guides for prospective parents and visitors, pupils are confident and polite and are good ambassadors for their school.

The curriculum is satisfactory, with good provision for pupils' personal development. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and sometimes good or even outstanding. However, planning is not always matched closely enough to the range of needs and too often marking does not really help pupils understand how to improve.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. The standards reached are not as high as in the past, because as the school expanded the mix of pupils changed; in particular, some of the additional pupils who joined had skills lower than expected for their age. Nevertheless, pupils are making satisfactory and sometimes good progress from their starting points and reach standards in English, mathematics and science that are broadly average by age 11. Those pupils who have learning difficulties also make satisfactory progress over time. Systems are in place to track pupils' progress and set targets for improvement but they are not sufficiently rigorous or challenging to ensure consistently good progress, particularly for those capable of reaching higher levels.

The school has undoubtedly been through what one parent described as a period of 'extraordinary change' in recent years. Governors and senior staff have successfully managed the practicalities of the building project and subsequent move to the new site, and made significant progress in bringing together the school and Children's Centre with a vision for the future that dares to do things differently. It is still early days and there is much to do, but there is a commitment from staff at all levels to 'realising the dream'. Many have forgotten the challenges of the transition phase and are genuinely enthusiastic about the potential of the new organisation. However, without under-estimating the enormity of what has been achieved, the time-consuming focus on change has been at the expense of further development of both middle management and systems to monitor provision and improve pupils' achievement.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Good leadership and management and a team that works well together have ensured that the Children's Centre has been successful in its move to the new site and its expansion to offer the full EYFS.

Children are making good progress in their personal development and learning because the quality of care and early education are good and parents receive valuable support in developing their child's learning through play. Every child has a key worker who knows them and their family well; all welfare requirements are fully met and the environment for children of all ages whether in the babies and toddlers' rooms, the 'stay and play' sessions, the crand;egrave;che or the Nursery and Reception classes, is exciting and stimulating. Of particular note are the outside learning environment and the rooms dedicated to wet play and building with blocks.

Most of the children begin Nursery with skills that are below those expected for their age. The care from the staff and the appealing range of activities on offer mean that they quickly settle into the daily routines. Children make good progress in their development and learning and become independent and confident learners, because the quality of teaching for three to five-year-olds is consistently good. The curriculum covers all the areas of learning and well-planned activities give children opportunities to develop their own interests and abilities. The free flow of movement between the inside and outside areas widens their learning experiences. Profile books are kept to record each individual's development for the Children's Centre and their family and staff are trialling new ways of checking children's progress and developing targets to help each child achieve their potential.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve tracking and target setting to accelerate pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science, particularly those capable of reaching higher levels.
- Raise the quality of teaching by matching work more consistently to the needs of pupils of all abilities and ensuring that they understand how to improve.
- Ensure that a more rigorous check is kept on the impact of the school's work.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

Pupils have joined the school at different ages and with different levels of skills. The standards they reach are broadly average; by age seven almost all reach the expected level in reading, writing and mathematics and by age 11 almost three quarters are now reaching expected levels in English, mathematics and science. However, at both ages the proportion of pupils reaching higher levels is lower than seen nationally.

Pupils' achievement in relation to their starting points is satisfactory. Evidence from national assessments, observations and pupils' work shows that progress is variable over time. It is usually satisfactory and sometimes it is good. For example, last year the progress made by a group of pupils in Year 6, identified as at risk of not reaching the expected level for their age,

was accelerated through a specific project using strategies such as individual tutoring and family support.

Pupils with moderate learning difficulties make satisfactory progress overall; it is better in some individual support sessions or smaller groups when they work with trained teaching assistants who focus on their individual targets.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils are happy and enjoy school. The youngest children and those new to the school settle in quickly and are well looked after by the older ones. Pupils grow in self-esteem and learn how to keep themselves safe and healthy. There is a focus on developing understanding and respect for others; pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, instances of bullying or racist behaviour are rare and pupils thrive in the school's harmonious community.

Pupils develop a range of skills that will stand them in good stead in the future. As school council members, monitors or helpers they learn to take on responsibility. They grow in confidence as they acquire new skills such as herding cows and on residential visits and develop team working skills through planning and leading projects. Pupils enjoy taking part in philosophical discussions and tackle complex issues such as 'What is valuable? Family or money?'

Attendance is satisfactory, but punctuality needs further improvement. Some parents do not make sure that their children arrive at school on time in the morning. This means they miss the beginning of lessons, which in turn affects their learning.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Inspectors saw a wide range of lessons from satisfactory to outstanding. Features of good teaching and learning include teachers creating a purposeful atmosphere that ensures children are ready and willing to learn. Specific techniques, for example asking pupils to discuss questions in pairs, or to quickly record and show their answer using individual boards and pens, are used to maintain pupils' attention. Careful questioning targets pupils, checking their progress and correcting misunderstandings. Calm and effective management of behaviour brings children back to task if their attention wanders.

However, there are also some weaknesses in teaching and learning. The work planned is not always closely matched to the full range of abilities within a group or class. This limits pupils' progress, particularly those capable of reaching higher levels. Although a marking policy has been introduced, feedback does not focus sufficiently on helping pupils see how to improve, nor is it always followed up.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

Overall, the curriculum is satisfactory. The focus in recent years since the school took in additional pupils has been on developing basic skills. A high proportion of the timetable is devoted to literacy and mathematics, and a range of group activities provides extra support for pupils with learning difficulties or who are learning English as an additional language.

Topic work is often used to teach other subjects, providing opportunities to explore themes and subjects in some depth. Visits and visitors enrich learning and the school makes good use of its rich locality; for example, some pupils take part in musical performances at the Barbican. There is good provision for pupils' personal development and well-being, ranging from opportunities to work alongside pupils from the special school on the same campus, through leading clubs in school to engaging in philosophical thinking.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The care and support for pupils and their families are of high quality. There is an extensive programme of additional support, practical help and links with outside agencies offered to parents, carers and families from the community through the Children's Centre. This has been extended to older pupils and their families through the appointment of a Head of Family and Community Services who works across the campus. Close links with a large number of other agencies, together with being on the same site as some health services, give rise to a wide range of opportunities to provide good support to pupils and their families. Procedures for health and safety and the safeguarding of pupils are secure.

Academic guidance is satisfactory. Targets are set to help pupils understand the next steps in their learning, but are not as effective as they could be because pupils and adults do not routinely refer to them in lessons.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Since the last inspection, the focus has been on the merger of the school and Children's Centre and the move to the new site. Governors have been influential in the development of the new organisation; together with senior staff they effectively promote the vision for the campus and ensure the commitment to high quality care and support is put into practice. Community cohesion is promoted well, particularly at a local level through the outreach work of the Children's Centre and the provision of extended services.

However, much is still work in progress. Roles across the campus are still under discussion, including those of middle managers. Systems to monitor the quality and impact of provision and to track pupils' achievement are not rigorous enough. For example, there is no systematic checking whether the emphasis on basic skills and additional support is meeting the needs of all pupils, nor whether sufficient time is given to other subjects, such as science. Regular meetings to discuss individual pupils are not as effective as they should be at improving progress, because the systems used for tracking pupils do not compare the levels they have reached and the progress they have made with that expected for their age. As a result, targets are not always sufficiently challenging.



**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**

## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

|   |                |
|---|----------------|
| Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate | School Overall |
|---|----------------|

### 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   |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection  | Yes |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?   | 2   |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements   | 3   |

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

|   |   |
|---|---|
| How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?              | 2 |
| How well do children in the EYFS achieve?   | 2 |
| How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS? | 2 |
| How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?                     | 2 |
| How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?                          | 2 |
| How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?                                 | 2 |

### Achievement and standards

|  |   |
|--|---|
| How well do learners achieve?  | 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/or disabilities make progress                           | 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.

## Personal development and well-being

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>                          | 2 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development                                     | 2 |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles   | 2 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices   | 2 |
| The extent to which learners enjoy their education  | 2 |
| The attendance of learners  | 3 |
| The behaviour of learners   | 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 | 2 |

## The quality of provision

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

## 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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards  | 3   |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation  | 3   |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated   | 3   |
| How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?   | 2   |
| 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  |

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

19 November 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Prior Weston Primary School and Children's Centre, London, EC1Y 8JA

It was lovely to meet you when we came to visit your school. Thank you very much to all of you who spoke to us in lessons, around school, in the playground and in the special meetings we had. It really helped us to find out all about the school.

We know from watching some of you lead tours for people thinking of sending their children to Prior Weston that you are proud of your school and the new building and we agree there are some good things about your school. The youngest children get a good start in the Children's Centre. Everybody really cares for you all, treats you as individuals and wants to make sure you are confident and well prepared for the future by the time you leave. You work well with pupils from Richard Cloudsley School and your behaviour is much better than last time the school was inspected! However, we think the school is satisfactory overall because we think some of you could be doing even better in your learning.

Before we left we talked to Mary, your headteacher, and to other members of staff and the governors about how to make your school even better. We asked them to keep a better check on how well you are all doing and to make sure they set targets for you that will challenge you to do as well as you possibly can, because we think more of you could be reaching the higher levels. To help with this, we think it is important that they make sure all lessons are good and that marking really helps you to understand how you can improve. Finally, we think they need to check more carefully that all their hard work is as effective as it can be, and to ask themselves whether they should do anything differently.

I hope you will help by continuing to be as well behaved and keen to learn as you are now. If you are one of the pupils who do not always turn up on time in the morning, please try harder to be there ready for when lessons start so that you do not miss valuable minutes of learning!

Yours sincerely

Alison Storey

Her Majesty's Inspector