

# Priory Fields School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	118391
<b>Local Authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	312917
<b>Inspection dates</b>	14–15 May 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Sarah Conway

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

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<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	325
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Bryan Cope
<b>Headteacher</b>	Anne Siggins
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	25 May 2005
<b>School address</b>	Astor Avenue Dover CT17 0FS
<b>Telephone number</b>	01304 211543
<b>Fax number</b>	01304 211545

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<b>Age group</b>	4-11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Priory Fields Primary School is larger than average. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. There is a higher proportion of pupils of Gypsy/Roma heritage than usual who are also learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above average. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is much higher than in other schools of a similar size.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Priory Fields Primary School provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. For a number of years standards have been well below average throughout the school, with pupils struggling to make satisfactory progress. The headteacher has worked hard with the local authority to alter this trend. She has been hampered by some staffing issues and difficulties in recruiting teachers. Parents are generally satisfied with the school although a minority share some concerns, also expressed by pupils, about pockets of poor behaviour in the school.

Recent improvements to teaching mean that pupils are making satisfactory progress across the school, with improvements evident, particularly in mathematics in both Key Stages 1 and 2 and writing in Key Stage 1. Pupils continue to make slow progress in reading in the Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1 with the result that standards remain well below average. By the end of Year 6 standards are improving but they are still below average. Boys are beginning to close the gap with their peers nationally, but their performance remains well below that found nationally.

Teaching is satisfactory across the school and in the Foundation Stage. The local authority's 'Raising Attainment in Your School' programme has helped senior leaders to sharpen their focus on improving pupils' standards and achievements as they recognise they are not high enough. Senior leaders have correctly focused on improving the quality of teaching to enable pupils to make the progress they need to in order to reach the standards expected nationally.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory. Behaviour is generally satisfactory although there are pockets of poor behaviour amongst some boys, which slows the pace of learning in some classes. Attendance, although below the national average, is improving through the robust action of school leaders. Pupils have a particularly clear understanding of how to keep healthy. Their preparation for future life is satisfactory. The curriculum covers the subjects it should and is satisfactory overall. Pupils know whom to turn to when they have an accident or are worried about something. Academic guidance is satisfactory and improving. Pupils know their targets in English and mathematics and what they have to do to improve.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Leaders know what the school needs to do to improve. Challenging targets are in place to secure that improvement. There are good systems to track and monitor pupils' progress but the school does not yet use assessment information as effectively as it could to ensure that all groups of pupils are making accelerated progress. Middle leaders are beginning to play a larger role in monitoring standards across the school, contributing to the school's satisfactory capacity to improve.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 3

Children's skills when they enter the Foundation Stage are much lower than expected, particularly in reading, writing and language communication. Aspects of their personal, emotional and social development are also weak, especially in their attitudes to learning. Provision has improved recently so that the attainment of children when they leave Reception, although still well below national averages, is slightly better than previous years and their progress is satisfactory. Reading is notably weaker than other areas.

Relationships between adults and children are warm and caring and children feel safe. Teachers use resources well to stimulate engagement and make effective use of questioning to stretch

children's thinking. Children enjoy each other's company and work collaboratively with each other to develop their social skills. Leadership and management are satisfactory.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- 
- Improve the teaching of reading across the school to raise pupils' achievement, especially that of boys.
- Improve behaviour so that it is consistently good to support children's learning.
- Use assessment information more effectively to improve achievement and raise standards for all groups of pupils.

A small proportion of the 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**

Children enter the school with levels of skills that are much lower than usually found. They make satisfactory progress in the Foundation Stage and enter Key Stage 1 with well below average levels across the areas of learning. They continue to make satisfactory progress from Year 1 to Year 6 but standards remain well below average by Year 2 and Year 6. This year however, children are making better progress in mathematics, reaching broadly average standards, than they are in reading and writing.

The Key Stage 2 test results in 2007 were broadly average in English but well below average in mathematics and science. A number of pupils who joined the school during Key Stage 2 made less progress than those in the school from Key Stage 1. This factor, combined with the poor behaviour of a minority of boys whose attainment in mathematics and science was particularly low, contributed to the unsatisfactory progress overall.

This year, the careful tracking each term of pupils' progress, together with some additional targeted teaching, has led to improvements in progress so that achievement is satisfactory and standards just below the national average. Additional programmes to support reading and the use of 'Big Write' are contributing to improved progress in English at Key Stage 2. However, standards in reading and writing remain too low, particularly in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1.

Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress because they receive additional support from teaching assistants. Likewise, the small number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and those for whom English is an additional language make satisfactory progress.

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

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils say that they enjoy their lessons. They know who to go to if they are worried about anything. Behaviour in the school is generally satisfactory, although there is some poor behaviour in a minority of classes. The school has robust procedures in place to improve attendance, which is lower than average as some parents take pupils out of school for long periods. Most pupils arrive at school on time and the school is working to ensure punctuality for all pupils. There are positive relationships between staff and pupils and pupils say that their teachers are fair.

Pupils talk enthusiastically about lunchtime and before- and after-school clubs, such as the breakfast club and the new cricket club run by the school. Pupils have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. They take part in a variety of fund raising activities for charity and have distributed food to the homeless. Older pupils have a range of opportunities for contributing to the life of the school, such as acting as play leaders or mentors to younger pupils. Younger pupils said they would like similar opportunities. Pupils develop satisfactory skills necessary for their future lives.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

The quality of teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, although this is inconsistent across the school. Classrooms are attractive places in which to learn and relationships between adults and pupils are generally positive. Where teachers work hard to make sure activities are varied and carefully matched to pupils needs, pupils are really enthusiastic, behave well and make good progress. In some classes, particularly in the early part of Key Stage 2, the teaching does not meet the needs of pupils, and as a result pupils find it hard to concentrate and their behaviour deteriorates. This slows the pace of learning. In older classes pupils make good progress because teaching is well targeted to meet the needs of pupils. The recent focus on improving mathematics teaching, to include activities that engage pupils in practical experience such as investigations, has led to improved achievement, particularly at Key Stage 1.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The school has recently reorganised the curriculum, which is improving. The programme of activities for children in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. The new 'Creative Curriculum' is beginning to have an impact on pupils' achievement in basic skills. Theme weeks take place regularly and these provide opportunities for exploring the wider world. For example, a recent culture theme week included Chinese dancing and a Chinese workshop, Czech food and the exploration of aboriginal paintings. Pupils are developing satisfactory skills in information and communication technology (ICT) and opportunities for small group activities are beginning to build teamwork well. The varied school clubs contribute to the pupils' enjoyment and achievement. There are still inconsistencies in ensuring that the curriculum meets the needs of all the pupils to accelerate their progress, particularly those learning English as an additional language.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 3**

Pupils feel safe and secure and are 'glad they belong to the school'. Child protection procedures are thorough. Regular health and safety checks are carried out and risk assessments undertaken when appropriate. The school has effective links with multi-agency services. A satisfactory curriculum supports pupils' personal, social and emotional well-being. The school is developing constructive relationships with local secondary schools to aid transfer at the end of Year 6.

Pupils' academic support and guidance are satisfactory. Pupils know their targets in English and mathematics and say that they help them to improve. They know what to do to achieve their targets helped by teachers' regular marking of pupils' work against their targets. Pupils

find their comments helpful but they have little opportunity to respond. They are not yet involved in identifying their own targets or monitoring their own progress.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Leaders have a clear focus on raising achievement and standards and ensuring that pupils' well-being is secure. The school is participating in a local authority initiative 'Raising Attainment in Your School', which has provided good support to the school in using challenging targets to raise standards. Leaders know what the school needs to do to improve but current systems to track and monitor pupils' progress are not used as effectively as they could be to help all groups of pupils to make faster progress. Middle leaders are still developing their role in monitoring progress in subjects and key stages. Governors have a clear picture of the school's priorities and are well placed to hold the school to account but they do not give sufficient emphasis to checking academic progress.

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## Annex A

## 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
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?	3
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### 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 disabilities make progress	3

### Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

### 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?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	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.

## Annex A

**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 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

19 May 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Priory Fields Primary School, Dover, CT17 0FS

Thank you very much for being so welcoming and helpful during our recent visit to your school. You told us you enjoy school and think your teachers are fair.

Here are some of things we found about your school.

- Priory Fields provides you with a satisfactory standard of education.
- The teaching ensures that you make satisfactory progress.
- The youngest children are also taught satisfactorily.
- By the time you leave Year 6, your standards are just below average.
- Your headteacher and other staff know what the school needs to do to improve.
- You know who to go to when you have a problem.
- You have a good understanding of how to live a healthy life.
- Your behaviour is satisfactory but some of you are concerned when the behaviour of others disturbs your learning.
- You have contributed to improvements in the school and younger children would like more opportunities to do this.

We have asked school leaders and governors to do three things to improve the school.

- Improve the teaching of reading across the school so that you all, particularly the boys, can make better progress.
- Ensure that everyone's behaviour is as good as it can be.
- Make better use of what your teachers know about how well you are doing to ensure all groups progress well.

You can help your teachers to make the school a better place to learn by all of you behaving as well as you can and attending regularly.

Best wishes

Sarah Conway Lead inspector