

Priory Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118416
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	312931
Inspection date	27 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Peter Sudworth

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4-7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	178
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Robert Crook
Headteacher	Lin Parry
Date of previous school inspection	14 June 2004
School address	Cannon Road Ramsgate CT11 9XT
Telephone number	01843 593105
Fax number	01843 852787

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school with a particular focus on the following: the factors leading to the school's consistently improving results in reading, writing and mathematics, investigation of the boys' performance compared to that of the girls, and evaluation of attainment and provision in science. Evidence was gathered from discussions with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, the chair of the governing body, staff and pupils. Parents' questionnaires were analysed and visits were made to lessons. Work samples and a range of documents and data were examined. Other aspects of the school were not investigated in detail but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's assessments given in its self-evaluation were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in the report.

Description of the school

Priory Infant School is a popular, smaller than average school. Children begin the Reception Year in small groups and all have begun full-time by the start of the second half of the autumn term. Before entry, the children attend a large number of pre-school settings. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is almost twice the national average. The school serves a community that contains some areas of high deprivation, but the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is, nevertheless, below the national average. The school is shortly to have a children's centre.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Priory Infant is a good school where children achieve well. Pupils who have initial difficulties in learning to read and write achieve outstandingly well. It is effectively led by its caring and long-serving headteacher, who justly earns the very strong support and respect of staff, parents and governors. The cohesive teamwork of the headteacher and other school leaders and their good monitoring arrangements ensure that the school knows itself well. It has judged itself accurately. The supportive governing body has a good blend of experienced and new governors. It is intelligently led.

Results at the end of Year 2 have been improving continuously over the last five years. Although pupils' attainment is well below expectations when they first enter school, pupils reach average standards. In 2007, results were above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics, but they were below average in science. The rise in standards is the result of the school's good focus on mathematics and English, including extra sessions in writing. Results in science are not as good as in reading, writing and mathematics because the subject has not received the same amount of developmental attention or resources. Furthermore, assessment systems in science have not enabled staff to track pupils' progress as well as in other aspects of their work. These matters are now being addressed. In the main, boys' attainment has not been as good as that of the girls but they achieve equally well, as do other groups of pupils. The majority of the high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties are boys.

Parents have supreme confidence in the school and speak highly of the friendly, welcoming atmosphere, the happiness of their children and the very good teamwork. As one parent writes: 'Priory Infant School has been a great start for my children. The facilities and extra-curricular activities are varied and interesting. The children feel involved, as do we as parents. We love it.' Parents speak well of their children's good progress. They find the staff approachable and helpful. It is this harmonious relationship between school and home which is one of the factors for the improved results. Other factors include the professional and hardworking staff, their keenness to improve provision for pupils by taking on well-researched approaches to children's learning, good analysis of pupils' progress and very effective intervention when pupils are not making expected gains in learning.

Staff take very good care of the pupils, deal swiftly with any issues of concern and provide support for the whole family. As a result, parents receive good advice about both their children's progress and their welfare. For example, advice about healthy packed lunches has enhanced parents' awareness of suitable lunchtime food. The school's regular meetings for parents mean that parents gain much confidence in understanding their shared role in their children's education. Parents' resultant support, using the school's excellent advice, assists the pupils' good progress, especially in reading and writing.

Pupils really enjoy school, as is shown in their good attendance. The children settle in well because of the very effective induction arrangements. Pupils engage with interest in the wide range of extra activities, which add to their enjoyment of school and to healthy living. One pupil speaking for others said: 'The school is a very lovely place and you can learn lots of things.' The well-planned curriculum, including that in the Foundation Stage, with good attention to information and communication technology, gives pupils a wide range of experiences. It makes very good provision for pupils with learning difficulties and has plans to further improve arrangements for pupils who show real talent and who are extremely capable. The good structure

to the personal, social and health education progress contributes effectively to the pupils' good personal development. Visits to local places of interest, such as to a supermarket and a synagogue, and visits from theatre groups, keep pupils' learning fresh and interesting. As a result, they have very good attitudes to their work and behave well. Pupils have a good understanding for their age of keeping safe, for example of road safety and the dangers of electricity, and of living healthily. They contribute well to the school community through the school council, which is currently researching ideas for a 'feeling room', which they explain will be 'somewhere to go when you are feeling sad'.

Teachers make lessons interesting and blend work from different subjects together effectively so that the creative side combines with basic skills to support pupils' understanding. Year 2 pupils designed a collage of the Great Fire of London, which helped them to understand how the close proximity of the houses caused the fire to spread. Teachers assist pupils in developing writing skills by giving them opportunities to practise writing in different subjects. In science, pupils wrote instructions on how to make a bulb light up in a simple electric circuit and they practised narrative and recount writing in their study of the Great Fire of London. Pupils' mathematical skills are not used as effectively, for example by using tables and graphs to demonstrate results of science experiments. Marking is satisfactory. Teachers make brief written comments about pupils' work, but do not often write comments that will help them to improve it.

Staff match the work well to pupils' different needs and this contributes effectively to the pupils' good progress. Teachers give particular attention to pupils who find difficulty in reading and writing. Their good attention to teaching letter sounds is a key reason for pupils' good progress in reading and writing. The teaching assistants have good skills. Occupational therapy, speech and language, and information and communication technology specialisms, for example, are used very well, particularly with pupils who have difficulties in learning to read and write, coordination or speech problems.

Priory Infant School has made good progress since the last inspection and its improving results and good all-round provision show its good capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Attainment on entry to the Reception classes is well below expectations, particularly in speech and language and in their social and emotional development. Good teaching enables pupils to make good progress, although many children still do not reach the expectations for the end of the Reception Year. The Foundation Stage curriculum is well planned. Children become absorbed in a wide variety of activities and make good strides in self-confidence and social skills. They quickly adjust to routines and tidy up quickly and efficiently when asked. Role-play areas are imaginative and provide good opportunities for learning. One area had been recently changed from being a rocket to become the research office for 'Diego' (a book character). Children captured butterflies and wrote 'notes' about their discoveries, engaging in focused discussions which helped their confidence in speech. Classrooms are well organised, bright and cheerful and value children's work. Leadership of the Foundation Stage provision is good and staff keep careful notes of the children's progress.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that assessment of pupils' progress and the use of resources in science are as effective as they are in English and mathematics to support pupils' progress and improve attainment.

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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?	2
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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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	1

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	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
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
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

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?	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.

Annex A

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

28 February 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Priory Infant School, Ramsgate CT11 9XT

I enjoyed meeting you when I came to visit your school. Thank you for sharing your work with me and talking to me about it. You really enjoy school. Your parents think that you attend a good school and I agree with them. Mrs Parry and the staff work really hard and make school very enjoyable for you. I was impressed with your good behaviour, the attention that you give to your lessons and how well you listen to your teachers. You make many friends in school and enjoy your playtimes with them.

All the staff are very caring and look after you really well. They work very hard and make your lessons interesting. Staff give you many opportunities to try new things, such as making pictures in different ways. I was impressed with the knowledge that you have about computers and how well you use them. The adults also give you several opportunities to learn other new things after school and at lunchtimes. Many of you take part in these and gain new skills.

You make good progress in school and reach the levels expected in most of your work. Those children who find learning difficult at first make excellent progress in reading and writing. However, many children could make better progress in science and I have asked the school to attend to this by making sure you have all the equipment you need and by carefully checking how well you are doing. You clearly know a lot about keeping yourselves safe and healthy by eating the right kind of food and taking part in activities that exercise your bodies.

Thank you once again for welcoming me to your school. I know that you will continue to work hard and do your best.

Yours sincerely

Peter Sudworth Lead Inspector



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Yours sincerely

Peter Sudworth
Lead Inspector