

Priestsic Primary and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122468
Local Authority	NOTTINGHAMSHIRE LA
Inspection number	314303
Inspection dates	13–14 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Keith Edwards

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	453
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr John Bowers
Headteacher	Mr David Binks
Date of previous school inspection	4 October 2004
School address	Park Street Sutton-in-Ashfield Nottinghamshire NG17 4BB
Telephone number	01623 465705
Fax number	01623 465805

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This large primary school serves the town of Sutton-in-Ashfield. Almost all of the pupils are of White British background and almost all come from homes where English is the first language. Many families suffer from hardships and the percentage of children entitled to free school meals is above average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational need is broadly average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school. It has improved significantly since the previous inspection and is very well set to maintain this momentum. The school leadership has systematically developed the quality of teaching and learning so that it is now outstanding. Standards have improved markedly. One delighted parent, whose views are echoed by many others, commented, 'I have nothing but praise for the hard work that everyone at Priestsic has put in to ensure my children achieve their full potential'.

Children enter the nursery with well below average skills for their age. Early language, literacy and numeracy skills are particularly poor. They make very rapid progress because teaching is of a consistently high standard and the quality of the children's experience provides a secure foundation for their future learning. Standards in reading and mathematics in the national assessments for pupils by Year 2 match the national trend but writing remains a difficulty for many pupils. Standards by Year 6 are good and improving rapidly, not only in the academic subjects, but also in information and communication technology (ICT) and art. The achievement of pupils is outstanding because they now have a much clearer idea of what they need to do to improve and are committed to learning. Boys and girls achieve equally well. Because they are very well supported, both by the teachers and a team of dedicated teaching assistants, those pupils who find learning difficult make excellent progress. The more able pupils are challenged to reach their potential through exciting investigations, particularly in mathematics and science. However, there remains scope for improvement in writing throughout the school.

The personal development and well-being of all pupils is exemplary. The pupils thoroughly enjoy coming to school. They feel safe and secure and respond well to the many initiatives encouraging them to adopt healthy lifestyles. Staff respect and value the pupils and consequently they develop self-confidence, self-esteem and self-discipline. Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. They work hard and play well together, forming excellent relationships with one another and with adults in school. The school could do more, however, to help prepare pupils for life in a multicultural society.

The headteacher provides outstanding leadership. Teamwork is at the heart of all of the school's successes. The headteacher has nurtured the ethos of high achievement and has motivated and empowered his colleagues to settle for nothing but the best. The children are very well cared for throughout the day and their academic guidance is excellent. The school's view of itself, although rather modest, has identified accurately those areas for further improvement. The school has the respect of the community that it serves and works closely with other schools and the community. Priestsic provides outstanding value for money.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage is outstanding. Teamwork between teaching and support staff is excellent and is the key to children's successful learning. The staff use every opportunity to overcome children's speech problems and poor language skills. The good ratio of adults to children ensures those in most need flourish because they receive one-to-one attention. The development of personal, social and emotional skills is impressively good. Learning is fun. Activities are exciting and challenging, ensuring a very good balance between independent and adult-led learning. There are effective systems for recording children's attainments and

monitoring progress. This information is used accurately to ensure children engage in activities that are well matched to their abilities and needs.

Despite such high quality input, many children do not reach attainments in line with national expectations by the time they move into Year 1, because poor early language and literacy skills remain an obstacle.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing by helping the pupils to organise their ideas more effectively
- Place greater emphasis on the celebration of the cultural diversity in modern British society.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Pupils make outstanding progress and have high achievements throughout the school. The pupils' performance in tests for eleven-year-olds in English and mathematics matches the national average and in science it is above. This represents a significant success for the school and is the result of dynamic teaching. The emphasis that the school has placed on active learning and developing speaking and listening skills has enhanced the pupils' achievements across the curriculum. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive sensitive support and carefully structured programmes of work. This enables them to make outstanding progress. Standards in ICT have risen through enhanced resourcing and the commitment of staff to make best use of it. Standards in art are well above average.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Personal development is outstanding. Impressively good behaviour, universally positive attitudes and excellent relationships permeate every aspect of school life. In discussion, pupils are unanimous in their enjoyment of learning, stating that, 'Everyone is friends here'. Uptake on clubs is high and playtimes are fun-packed, harmonious, social occasions. The sports' co-ordinator makes a significant contribution to pupils' understanding of healthy lifestyles. Pupils value the care shown to them and feel very involved in all decision-making. By the time they leave, most pupils have acquired very secure social and academic skills for their future economic well-being. Through initiatives such as running the tuck shop, pupils make a meaningful contribution to the school community. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall; their moral and social education is outstanding. Pupils express their cultural appreciation very effectively through good quality artwork. However, multicultural education is not as strongly developed.

Despite the school's best efforts to improve attendance, rates remain slightly below average, primarily because some families do not recognise the importance of sending their children to school regularly.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. It is the main reason for the pupils' high achievement. Pupils talk enthusiastically about their teachers who 'make lessons fun so that

we enjoy learning'. Throughout the school excellent relationships, superb classroom management skills and very detailed planning enable pupils to succeed. Teaching assistants are capable, competent and highly valued members of the team. They happily and confidently provide good support in lessons to all pupils, and in particular to those with learning difficulties and disabilities. Further help is provided by a team of committed parents who support pupils' reading during the school day. The teachers make outstanding use of the interactive whiteboards in all classrooms to stimulate and enhance the pupils' learning. Teachers mark work thoughtfully and clearly tell pupils how well they are doing or what they should do to improve. This ongoing dialogue between staff and pupils strongly supports learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding and successfully meets the interests and abilities of all pupils. A recent review of the curriculum, which included the views of pupils, has resulted in work that focuses even more on improving their skills. Stimulating opportunities are planned in the Foundation Stage for pupils to explore, investigate and use their imagination. School funded visits, and visitors to the school, help to bring subjects alive and broaden the pupils' knowledge of the wider community. The wide range of extra-curricular clubs meets many of the pupils' interests and enriches the curriculum very well. Pupils enjoy the many regular opportunities for physical education and sporting activities, which encourage them to be active. The excellent range of well-planned topics makes sure that the pupils successfully develop their literacy, numeracy, and ICT skills.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school has outstanding arrangements in place for ensuring pupils' safety and health. Child protection and health and safety procedures are clear and fully understood by staff. There is a strong emphasis on nurturing and developing each child as an individual. The adults provide excellent role-models and consequently the school is a happy and inviting place in which to work and learn. The school provides excellent day-to-day care for the pupils. The school's leadership consults regularly with pupils and respects their views and ideas for improvements. The school has an outstanding knowledge of pupils' academic progress and identifies pupils who need additional support or challenge. Guidance for improvement is given to pupils through careful marking and discussions with them individually. This enables pupils to make at least good, and more often exceptional, progress during their time in school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The leadership and management of the school are outstanding. 'The headteacher is one in a million and does wonders for the school'. This comment from one of the parents accurately sums up the outstanding leadership of the headteacher. He leads from the front and has been resolute in his drive for excellence. There has been outstanding progress in recent years; every aspect of school life has shown improvement. The headteacher has recruited staff with meticulous care and nurtured a strong team spirit. The senior staff are very effective in their role of monitoring standards and improving pupil performance. The refinement of the quality of teaching and the use of assessment procedures to ensure that the work set enables all groups

of pupils to achieve their best, have been key successes since the previous inspection. Consequently, the pupils are highly motivated and standards have continued to rise. The leadership team have accurately identified those few areas that require further refinement and continue to strive for further improvement. The governing body is fully involved in strategic development and has become confident in its ability to hold the school to account, particularly in terms of understanding school effectiveness.

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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?	1
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	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
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?	1
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	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
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?	1

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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
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

15 November 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Priestsic Primary School, Park Street, Sutton-in-Ashfield.

We really enjoyed our visit to your school this month because everybody was so helpful and friendly. We particularly enjoyed our discussions with you and hearing your views on Priestsic School. It was also delightful to be able to work with you in your classrooms, join in with your morning assemblies, watch your sports sessions and see you playing games outside. I can fully understand why you enjoy your school so much as there are so many things that make your school very special. Here are some of them:

- You clearly want to do your best to learn in lessons and are prepared to work hard.
- Everybody understands the school rules and your behaviour is wonderful.
- Everybody tries to be friendly, thoughtful and helpful. Well done!
- Your teachers are fabulous and they work hard to make your lessons interesting and fun.
- The school provides a wide range of activities and visits to keep you interested.
- Your artwork is wonderful.
- Mr Binks is an excellent headteacher.

You are very fortunate to be able to attend Priestsic Primary School. Not many schools are as good as yours. This is because Mr Binks and the staff really understand how to make learning fun and work very hard to help you. It is really important that you remember to thank them and continue to work hard. I know that you achieve very well, but I am asking your teachers to keep on finding ways to help you to improve your writing. The school should also do more work to help you appreciate the richness of the different cultures in our society. This sounds like more hard work but we know that you can pull together and do it.

Very best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Keith Edwards

Lead inspector