

Pyrgo Priory School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102320
Local Authority	Havering
Inspection number	323620
Inspection dates	23–24 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Trevor Davies

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.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	341
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	48
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Ray Day
Headteacher	Mrs Lorraine Clayden
Date of previous school inspection	7 June 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Settle Road Harold Hill Romford RM3 9RT
Telephone number	01708 342165
Fax number	01708 386620

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Pyrgo Priory is a larger than average school. It is situated in extensive grounds on the edge of a large housing estate in the Harold Hill area of Romford. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is higher than the national average, as is the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The proportion of pupils whose first language is not English has increased significantly in recent years. The school holds Gold awards for Sports and Arts.

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 a great school where everyone works together for the benefit of the children' is a comment typical of the regard that many parents have for this outstanding school. The headteacher and her leadership team are exemplary role models, and their care and commitment inspire all adults working in the school to provide a very high quality of education for the pupils. All members of the staff and governing body work hard towards the same goal of helping pupils to achieve to the best of their ability in a safe, caring environment. The school has sustained its achievement since the previous inspection and its record of accomplishment shows that it has an excellent capacity to improve even further.

Pupil numbers have risen, mainly due to the closure of another local school. A large proportion of these pupils entered the school with lower skills than their classmates. Despite this, standards have been maintained and pupils make excellent progress. By the end of Year 6, standards are above average in reading and mathematics, and broadly average in writing. This represents outstanding achievement from a very low starting point when children enter the school. The excellent progress of pupils is evident in all year groups, and is tracked and monitored very effectively by teachers, the leadership team and governors to ensure that pupils achieve as well as they possibly can. Pupils with learning difficulties, and those for whom English is not their first language, receive high-quality additional support and also make outstanding progress.

Parents are tremendously positive in their views on the school. They remark on the reasons that they believe to be behind the outstanding progress that the children make in their learning. 'The help that my child gets is excellent' is just one such comment. The behaviour of most pupils is excellent and helps to develop a great learning atmosphere. Pupils are able to work on their own or equally well in small groups. The emphasis which the school has placed on reading skills has not only led to a big improvement in standards but has also helped the children to be more independent and to take greater responsibility for their own learning. 'My reading has improved no end', stated one. This also typifies the strong partnership between home and school, in which parents, staff and children work together to improve the children's reading, using their reading record and regular homework.

The pupils rightly find the curriculum exciting and inspiring. It is enriched by the quality of music, sport and the many additional visits. Clubs and activities, give very good support to pupils' personal development and well-being. Year 3 and 4 pupils learn about the past by visiting Colchester Castle, and during the inspection children from the Early Years Foundation Stage visited a farm. Clubs, such as the Home Club, teach pupils how to cook and eat well, tackle obesity, and contribute strongly to pupils' well-being. They have a secure understanding of the importance of healthy living and exercise, and a well-developed sense of staying safe. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent and is integrated through all aspects of school life. The school council represents the views of the pupils, which are drawn from class council meetings.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Parents talk very positively about their children's first experience of school. They feel that staff 'really help children to settle in' and 'provide an excellent start to their time at school'. The majority of children start school with skills well below those expected, with an increasing number

of children needing extra support in speech, language and mathematical development. Both Nursery and Reception classes provide an inspiring, welcoming and well-planned environment, and consider the unique talents of every child when planning activities. Staff make good use of both indoor and outdoor learning. Themes such as 'The Farm' allow children to develop skills across the full range of early learning experiences. Teaching is excellent and staff use assessments carefully to plan next steps in learning, so that most children make very good progress. Consequently, by the end of the Reception year, most children are working at close to expected levels. Leadership and management are very strong, and the impact of this is shown by the outstanding quality of learning and the excellent achievement from the low baseline. Leaders have high aspirations and evaluate provision continually, which results in ongoing improvements in all aspects.

What the school should do to improve further

- Accelerate pupils' progress in writing.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Provisional tests and teachers' assessments in 2009 show that pupils' attainment continues to rise, building on the progress and achievement of the previous year. From a very low starting point when they first enter school, pupils make outstanding progress overall in reading and mathematics. Even in writing where they are not doing quite as well, pupils make good progress. As a result, attainment by pupils in Year 2 is broadly average, and by the end of Year 6 it is above. Pupils' progress is equally strong in other age groups, as it is for children whose first language is not English and for pupils with learning difficulties. These improvements have been achieved by consistently high-quality teaching, and focused work on key skills, such as linking sounds to letters. Assessment information and tracking data are very effectively used to target and remedy any underachievement.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils make outstanding progress in their personal development. They enjoy all that the school offers, have very positive relationships with staff and other pupils, and are invariably ready to learn. 'My children love coming to Pyrgo Priory School. The children get on with each other there and are happy', is a comment by one parent, whose sentiments are shared by many others. This has a considerable impact on the progress they make in lessons and is underpinned by their behaviour, which is usually excellent. The few pupils who find it difficult to learn are supported very well and are helped to begin to take responsibility for their behaviour. Pupils develop an excellent understanding of how to be healthy and safe. The school council ensures that pupils' views are taken into account, and the council members are particularly proud of the improvements being made to playtime equipment. Attendance levels are rising and there are good procedures for promoting good attendance and tackling absence. Pupils make excellent progress in their basic skills, and this means that they are very well prepared for their future. They contribute to, and gain an understanding of, their local community, and work with members of St Francis Hospice and the Salvation Army, who come into the school every week to work with disadvantaged families.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

High-quality teaching contributes to pupils' progress and is a major reason why the school is successful. Lessons are planned carefully to ensure that pupils' differing needs are met. Very good questioning helps to challenge more-able pupils and enables teachers to build up a clear picture of how pupils of all abilities are doing, and what needs extra attention. A high priority is placed on helping pupils to develop the speaking and listening skills they need in order to learn effectively. There is a high level of consistency in the way that staff approach their work, which is well matched to pupils' abilities. Intervention and support for communication, language and literacy means that achievement for pupils such as those with speech and language difficulties is the same as for other pupils. Those new to teaching are supported very well to enable them to make a good start to their careers. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' capabilities, and an enthusiasm for their work, which rubs off on the pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

Music is the strength of the curriculum. The choir performs at the Royal Albert Hall and at local events, and pupils' enjoyment of music is very evident in lessons and assemblies. The curriculum is exceptionally well planned and focused. This ensures that pupils have a secure grasp of basic skills in reading and mathematics, and that the curriculum is sufficiently rich and varied to encourage them to apply these skills. The school has introduced a writing project to help improve the level of pupils' writing, and this is beginning to have a positive effect. Pupils make excellent academic progress as a result of this and have the opportunity to use their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills in other curriculum areas. In Years 3 and 4 for example, they design, make and write about good-luck charms in their India topic, and in a Year 5 and 6 lesson, pupils knew how to use and read force metres in their science investigation. Additional activities help to enliven the curriculum. These include visits to museums and local churches to learn about different faiths, but also after-school clubs such as rock climbing, trampolining and a sport club for Year 1 and 2. There is also provision for more-able pupils through the school's 'P4C' club, Philosophy for Children.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The exceptionally high level of care for pupils is the outstanding feature of this outstanding school. All staff work diligently to ensure that pupils feel safe and are able to learn. Procedures to protect children, including those who are potentially vulnerable, are excellent. The school has firm, well thought-out strategies such as 'Pram Club' to reach out to families who find it difficult to come into or communicate with the school. Systems to check on the suitability of adults to work with children are extremely robust. A careful check is made of the risk by all activities and visits out of school. The school has worked tirelessly with governors and outside agencies to improve attendance. First-day calling, free alarm clocks, breakfasts and transport are improving attendance figures. Pupils with learning difficulties, and those new to learning English, are supported very well. As a result, these pupils, including those with speech and language difficulties, make rapid progress. Staff keep a very close check on pupils' progress in all subjects. The information gathered is used very well to track the progress of pupils of

different abilities or backgrounds, and to identify where extra help might be needed. High-quality feedback to pupils, coupled with challenging personal learning targets, adds to pupils' understanding of how well they are doing and where they can improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The headteacher has had a profound influence on the school's achievement because of her outstanding evaluation of the school's work. Through her strong leadership and the excellent support provided by her senior team and governors, the school has a clear sense of direction and purpose. Their effectiveness in raising standards and achievement and in moving the school forward has been recognised by parents, one of whom wrote, 'The head and teaching staff are doing a fantastic job.' The senior leadership team has responded exceptionally well to the changing intake of the school by very effectively targeting support to those pupils who need it. Subject leaders are increasingly effective in building up a clear picture of standards and achievement in their areas, and identifying the next stage of development. There are clear lines of delegation, responsibility and accountability for teaching teams and subject managers. The governors are very supportive of the school, while also challenging it, and holding it to account for its decisions. The school fulfils a very cohesive role within the community. This is because the school, which is at the hub of its community, has analysed its role within the local area and has excellent systems for engagement and support, for families and organisations from different faiths and backgrounds, both locally and worldwide, with very positive results.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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/or disabilities make progress	1

¹Grade 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

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
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 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

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 eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

07 July 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Pyrgo Priory School, Romford, RM3 9RT

It was a real privilege to visit your school. Thank you for being so helpful and making us so welcome. We really enjoyed talking to you and looking at your work. You told us that you really enjoy coming to school and we agree with you that it is an excellent school.

Here are some of the things the school does well.

- You are reaching higher standards and making outstanding progress in reading, mathematics and science. You all enjoy music and performing, and we loved your school choir.
- Your headteacher is doing an excellent job. The other teachers and governors are a great help to her in running the school.

You all get on really well and your behaviour is excellent.

There is just one thing we have asked the school to do to make things even better.

- We have asked them to raise standards in writing even more.

You can help by continuing to do your best and enjoying your time at school. Remember to ask teachers if you need help.

Well done; you can all feel very proud.

Yours faithfully

Trevor Davies

Lead Inspector