

The Priory Parish CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105085
Local Authority	Wirral
Inspection number	336422
Inspection dates	15–16 July 2010
Reporting inspector	Clare Henderson

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	196
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Christine Francis
Headteacher	Mr Peter Faragher
Date of previous school inspection	2 November 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors observed 12 lessons taught by nine different teachers. They held meetings with governors, staff and pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at documents relating to safeguarding, pupils' progress and attainment, the curriculum, the school's development plan and the way in which the school evaluates its own performance. The views of parents and carers, through 40 returned inspection questionnaires, and the opinions of staff and pupils were analysed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- pupils' achievement in English and mathematics, particularly for more able pupils
- consistency in the quality of teaching and the use made of assessment to enable all pupils to make outstanding progress
- how safe pupils feel, the quality of their behaviour and the extent to which they adopt healthy lifestyles and contribute to school and the wider community
- how well the school's belief that 'a culture of high achievement, with management creating and maintaining it' is realised.

Information about the school

This school is average in size. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for a free school meal is high. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is also high. A few pupils are from minority ethnic heritages. The proportion of pupils joining or leaving the school other than at the beginning of the school year is above average. The school has gained National Healthy Schools status, Artsmark Gold, Investors in People and Activemark Awards.

The school provides designated resource provision for up to 10 pupils with speech and language or communication difficulties. A pre-school operates within the school. This provision was subject to a separate inspection and a report about its quality can be found on the Ofsted website.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school. It serves its local community well and provides exemplary pastoral support to meet the individual personal needs of its pupils. Many pupils begin school with skills which are below those expected at this age and with particularly low communication and social skills. They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage because of the high priority adults give to developing their language and social skills. This good rate of progress continues as pupils move through the school. Consequently, by the time they leave in Year 6, their attainment is average. Pupils' current work and the school's own data show that rates of progress are good across the school.

Pupils say they enjoy their learning, which is enriched well within the good curriculum. This is because sport, music and creative arts are given a high profile. The close attention teachers have given, since the last inspection, to extending pupils' writing skills is paying off with rising standards. However, pupils' attainment and the progress they make would accelerate further if all lessons consistently built on and extended what they already know. Pupils are happy at school and enjoy their lessons. They develop a good understanding of what is needed to lead healthy and safe lifestyles. Furthermore, the contribution they make to their school and wider community is good. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall, although they have too few opportunities to engage with pupils from different religious, ethnic and cultural backgrounds within the wider world.

The vast majority of parents and carers rate the school very highly. A good partnership between home and school contributes to pupils' good behaviour and their enthusiastic attitude to learning. However, although current levels of persistent absence have fallen, attendance is still low. This is because a few families do not support the school's strenuous efforts to improve attendance by ensuring that their children attend school regularly.

Senior leaders, supported by an effective and dedicated governing body, provide strong leadership. The school has a clear picture of its strengths and weaknesses and all staff contribute to monitoring the school's performance. Central to improvement in pupils' achievement is the ongoing review, undertaken by leaders, staff and governors, of pupils' learning. This demonstrates the school's good capacity for sustained improvement in the future.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' attainment and accelerate progress in English and mathematics further

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by ensuring that:

- – all lessons consistently build on and extend what pupils already know.
- Raise attendance by:
 - – exploring further ways to work with pupils and families to reduce the proportion of pupils who do not attend regularly.
- Enhance the promotion of community cohesion by:
 - – providing pupils with more opportunities to engage with other children from different religious, ethnic and cultural backgrounds in the United Kingdom and abroad

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Achievement is good and most pupils enjoy their learning. In most lessons, pupils are well behaved and keen to do well. They work at a good pace and subsequently make good progress. They are well motivated and interested in learning, particularly when lessons are practical or involve role play. For instance, in Year 5, pupils thoroughly enjoyed designing and operating the fairground rides they had invented. In such lessons, they are challenged to plan, reason and recall scientific information and effectively use skills previously learned. They tackle this confidently, knowing exactly what to do and how to set about the task. Such practical learning gives a boost to pupils' self-confidence and provides a high level of challenge for the more able pupils. The school works well to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, particularly for those in the resource provision, by providing work that meets their learning needs, skills and understanding well. As a result, these pupils make similar good progress to their classmates.

Pupils develop a good understanding of safety and most behave well. They say incidents of bullying are rare and, on the few occasions these incidents occur, they are quickly resolved by staff. Pupils have a good understanding of health issues and within the curriculum there is a strong emphasis on healthy living. Pupils value the responsibilities they are given to contribute to the school and to the local community, for instance, as play leaders they organise games at lunch time for the younger pupils.

Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills enable all pupils to reach average levels of attainment. Their information and communication technology (ICT) skills are above those expected. This, together with improving attendance, prepares them adequately for the next stage in their school life.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Good relationships with pupils, high staffing ratios and good quality intervention programmes delivered by highly skilled support staff ensure all pupils make good progress in their learning. Teachers provide pupils with good oral feedback so that they know how they can improve their work. The quality of marking, evident in pupils' books, though variable, is good overall. The effective use of assessment strategies, such as talk partners, helps pupils to learn to listen, cooperate and share ideas well with one another.

The curriculum is good and has been used effectively to raise pupils' attainment in English and mathematics to average. For instance, in Year 6, whilst pupils learn about the life of Anne Frank, they are provided with historical, social and moral perspectives to enrich the quality of their writing, whilst extending their understanding and empathy for others in wartime conditions. Pupils make the most of and thoroughly enjoy the many opportunities they are given to engage in enrichment activities. Exciting visits and events, such as learning circus skills, participating in school drama productions or entering 'Priory's Got Talent', increase their self-confidence and enterprise skills well.

Parents and carers agree that their children are extremely well looked after and that the school is a safe and secure place. Pupils are happy to go to staff with any concerns. All adults are particularly sensitive to those who are more vulnerable. The school has worked strenuously to raise attendance. This is paying off and, although attendance is low, it is improving and the number of pupils who are persistently absent has reduced significantly. The school works successfully to ensure that, when pupils return from periods of absence or are new to the school, they receive intensive support, emotionally

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and academically, to enable them to catch up in their learning. Induction and transfer to secondary school are managed well.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The extremely caring headteacher, together with highly committed senior leaders, provides strong leadership and a clear educational direction and ambition to improve. The culture established in the school is one of care, ensuring equal opportunities for all. This is evident, for instance, in narrowing the gap in attainment for those who are more vulnerable and for pupils who have long periods of absence. Nevertheless, more work is needed to raise attendance and, in particular, to encourage more families to cooperate with the good range of incentives the school has put in place to help to raise attendance. The governing body makes sure that all statutory requirements are met. They ensure that all safeguarding requirements are fully met and that pupils' safety has a high profile in all of the school's work. The management and monitoring of teaching are shared by all staff; the school knows itself well and has a clear picture of how it can improve further. Staff are constantly striving for ways to improve the learning opportunities for all pupils. Partnerships with others are good, particularly in promoting pupils' social and emotional development. The quality of community cohesion is good overall. It is strong within the local community. However, there is a limited range of opportunities for pupils to link up with children with different religious, ethnic and cultural backgrounds to their own within the wider world.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms	
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children get off to a good start in their learning in the Reception class. This is because adults pay close attention to developing their speaking, listening, writing and social skills. A wide range of opportunities is provided, both indoors and outdoors, which develop children's physical skills well. This is despite the current, though soon to be improved, limited outdoor space. In the happy environment, children become confident and happy learners who play well together as they choose from the wide range of activities on offer. All adults take good care of children and ensure that all welfare requirements are met. Planning is based around children's interests and focuses on enriching their life experiences. For instance, visitors teaching circus skills sparked a range of play activities, which saw the big top, circus acts, including the production of tickets for the show, being enacted in children's play. Similarly, a trip to the farm and parkland resulted in children drawing and tracing their routes. Such activities develop children's mathematical skills and their knowledge and understanding of the world well. The school works hard to engage parents and carers so that they have an active role to play in their children's education. Leadership is good and all adults work together as an effective team. They use observations effectively to track children's progress. Although outcomes in most areas of learning for most children are generally below the level expected when they move to Year 1, given their low start, this reflects good progress.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

All 40 parents and carers who replied to the questionnaire agree that their children enjoy school, that the school keeps their children safe and that they are content with the education and care their children receive. Comments such as 'it is a close knit school

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which has a family feel' and 'staff are approachable and any concerns are sorted on the spot' reflect the positive views of most parents and carers. A few feel that they would like more information about how well their children are progressing in their learning and how they can help them to learn at home. Evidence indicates that parents and carers are given regular information about their children's progress. Inspection evidence confirms the positive responses which most parents and carers submitted about all aspects of the school's work.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Priory Parish CofE Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 40 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 194 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	36	90	3	8	1	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	33	83	6	15	0	0	1	3
The school informs me about my child's progress	32	80	6	15	2	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	30	75	9	23	0	0	1	3
The teaching is good at this school	36	90	4	10	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	34	85	6	15	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	32	80	8	20	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	31	78	7	18	1	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	33	83	6	15	0	0	1	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	25	63	13	33	1	3	1	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	30	75	8	20	2	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	33	83	6	15	1	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	35	88	3	8	1	3	1	3

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



19 July 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Priory Parish CE Primary School, Birkenhead, CH41 4HS

I would like to thank you for the help you gave the team when we inspected your school. We especially enjoyed watching you as you learnt the circus skills and also when you were singing in assembly. Now I would like to share with you what the inspection found out about your school. It is a good school. These are some of the best things about it.

- You have lots of fun and enjoy learning while you play in the Reception class.
- All adults take good care of you and you told us that you feel safe in school.
- You are making good progress and reach average standards in English and mathematics by the time you leave Year 6.
- You behave well and have a good knowledge of how to lead a healthy life.
- The school provides many exciting things for you to learn, for instance, designing your fairground rides in Year 5.

To make the school even better, I have asked teachers to:

- make sure that all lessons build on and extend what you already know in English and mathematics
- work with you and your parents and carers to reduce the number of you who miss all the fun and learning at school because you are absent too much
- give you more opportunities to engage with pupils from different religious, ethnic and cultural backgrounds within the wider world.

We hope you will play your part by continuing to work hard and do your best to help Priory Parish become an even better school.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Clare Henderson

Lead inspector

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