

Priory Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122531
Local Authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	340165
Inspection dates	10–11 June 2010
Reporting inspector	Richard Marsden

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	158
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Anne Baldry
Headteacher	Mrs Susan Curson
Date of previous school inspection	31 January 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed eight teachers in 17 lessons. They held meetings with groups of pupils, governors, and staff. They looked at safeguarding documentation, attendance records, information on pupils' attainment and progress, the curriculum, the school's self-evaluation and planning, as well as questionnaires from staff, pupils and 64 parents and carers.

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

- the progress and attainment of current pupils
- the achievement of different groups of pupils
- the quality of the school's procedures for tracking pupils' progress
- the extent to which pupils themselves know how to improve their work.

Information about the school

The school is smaller than average. Most pupils are of White British heritage, and very few are learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above national norms but the proportion of pupils with a statement of special needs is below average. The school holds the Healthy Schools, Artsmark Gold, and the Eco Schools Bronze awards. Pupils are taught in six classes which include three mixed-age classes for Years 4 and 5.

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

The school provides a good education for its pupils. Pupils make good progress and attain above average standards.

The school provides an exceptionally caring and supportive environment in which staff know pupils very well as individuals and take care to ensure that all pupils thrive. The support for pupils facing challenging circumstances is outstanding. Pupils cooperate very well with adults and act considerately towards one another. Pupils who arrive at the school with challenging behaviour are very well managed to ensure that their behaviour does not disrupt the learning of others. Pupils understand the importance of healthy lifestyles and can point to ways in which they put their knowledge into practice.

The school's engagement with parents and carers is also outstanding. Parents and carers find the school open and welcoming, and they appreciate opportunities such as the parents' forum and adult learning sessions which involve them in their children's education. Partnerships with other schools also make an outstanding contribution to the pupils' learning. They enable the school to provide an interesting and challenging range of extra-curricular opportunities for pupils and ensure that teachers are at the forefront of developments within education.

Areas for improvement, noted at the last inspection have been robustly addressed.

The school has improved its tracking of pupils' progress so that it now has a clear view at all stages of how well individual pupils are doing, and can pinpoint very clearly any areas of under-achievement. These are energetically tackled to ensure that all pupils maximise their potential. Pupils' writing remains an area where progress is uneven, but the impact of the school's interventions is being felt as pupils' standards rise.

Pupils, particularly older ones, now understand and talk enthusiastically about the levels at which they are working, and what they need to do to improve. Their confidence and motivation to learn is very high.

The unevenness in the achievement of different groups of pupils has been addressed. Although there have been some minor variations in the attainment of boys and girls year by year, inspectors noted good progress by all groups of current pupils.

This track record of improvements, along with the effectiveness of leaders' evaluation of the school's work and their clear understanding of its strengths and weaknesses, indicate that the school has a good capacity to improve further.

Although the school itself is a cohesive community and promotes community cohesion locally, its influence on pupils' cultural development beyond the immediate locality, including overseas, is as yet under-developed.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate pupils' progress by securing greater consistency across all classes in the approach to the teaching and learning of writing
- Improve the school's promotion of community cohesion by developing links beyond the school, including overseas.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

In lessons observed, pupils made good progress, enjoying challenging tasks and inspiring topics. Pupils work well on their own or in groups, showing resilience and resourcefulness. Attainment has been above average in English, mathematics and science in recent years, and the school's detailed assessment information on current pupils indicate that standards are rising, although writing is still not as strong as the other areas. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive good support, and, as a result they too make good progress.

Pupils readily say that teachers look after them well and that they feel safe in school. They state confidently that bullying is rare and that teachers manage any incidences effectively. They know about cyber-safety, road safety and the dangers of drug abuse.

The school provides many opportunities for pupils to contribute to their school or the local community and thus to develop a sense of responsibility. The school council, for example, is active and effective in making decisions such as choosing play equipment. Pupils serve as buddies and play leaders, organise charity events, write for the parish magazine, and involve themselves in the village preservation society.

As well as promoting above average standards in literacy and numeracy, the school ensures that pupils' information and communication technology (ICT) capability is well developed, and that they acquire skills in team working, decision making and problem solving. This all prepares them well for their future in the working world.

Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development are good. They show a good understanding of the views of other people and, through visits and visitors, enjoy contact with people whose beliefs or lifestyles are different from their own, although they have few opportunities for contact with communities overseas which limits their cultural development. They resolve conflicts sensibly. They respond well to opportunities to think deeply about values and principles. In one lesson, for example, pupils challenged one another with questions such as 'How do we know that reality isn't a dream?' and 'Why did God give us the intelligence to destroy our planet?'

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	2
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	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teachers plan carefully so that pupils can get on with work for themselves rather than sitting and listening to the teacher for long periods. This makes classrooms busy places where motivation is high. Lessons include group work, competitions, hands-on activities and imaginative use of ICT to support learning. Teaching assistants know the pupils they support very well and are proactive in supporting them. Pupils reflect on their work and assess it well themselves. The quality of teachers' marking is also good, giving pupils a clear indication of how to improve.

The curriculum is broad and balanced, meeting statutory requirements. Skills development as well as knowledge acquisition are emphasised: teachers talk of developing mathematicians or historians rather than simply 'doing' arithmetic or the Vikings, for example. This opens up opportunities for pupils to think creatively and solve problems, significantly raising their motivation. Themed activities, visitors, such as the 'Viking' and the 'Tudor', outdoor learning, and residential visits are all highly valued and enrich learning well. Sporting and arts based activities, many of them arranged in collaboration with partner institutions, are popular with pupils.

Pupils are exceptionally well known as individuals. In this very caring and supportive environment teachers take great care to ensure that new pupils settle in fully, and to smooth the way for pupils as they prepare to move to their next school. The school is tenacious in its support for pupils whose circumstances put them at risk of failure: in recent years it has reduced to zero the number of pupils whose behaviour has led to exclusion.

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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	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and staff have high levels of ambition for improvement. Teaching quality is carefully monitored and analysed, and effective action taken when weaknesses are found. Staff work well together as a team and set themselves challenging targets.

Governors are well informed about the school and closely involved in its day-to-day work. They bring a range of skills to their task. They are supportive ambassadors for the school, and offer robust challenge in order to influence decisions.

The school benefits from an extensive range of partnerships. The University of Nottingham, for example, provides activities for gifted and talented pupils; teachers undergo training alongside colleagues from other schools to ensure a common understanding of pupils' standards. A wide range of agencies help the school to support pupils from vulnerable circumstances, to ensure that nobody 'slips through the net' and that equal opportunities are available to all.

The school securely meets the statutory requirements for the safeguarding of children. It acts rapidly and decisively on all issues relating to pupils' safety.

In order to broaden pupils' awareness of other communities and increase their cultural understanding, the school has begun to develop links with schools abroad. These are at any early stage and their impact has not yet been felt. The school's promotion of community cohesion beyond the immediate locality is therefore limited. The school has an informed understanding of its own context and has ambitious plans to improve this aspect of its work.

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	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1

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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	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

In the questionnaires, parents and carers were highly positive in their responses and some added glowing comments, particularly for the care and support offered by the school. The following was typical: 'Staff listen and respond to questions that I might have about my child. They are approachable and friendly and very reassuring. My child has made great progress since being at this school.'

A few parents and carers expressed concern about progress or behaviour. Progress was a major focus throughout the inspection, but behaviour became a special focus during the second day. However, rigorous investigation uncovered nothing except good progress and good behaviour.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Priory Junior 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 64 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 158 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	33	52	30	47	0	0	1	2
The school keeps my child safe	40	63	23	36	1	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	31	48	29	45	4	6	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	27	42	30	47	6	9	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	33	52	31	48	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	30	47	30	47	4	6	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	32	50	31	48	1	2	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)	26	41	31	48	5	8	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	26	41	34	53	3	5	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	28	44	26	41	6	9	3	5
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	25	39	34	53	3	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	38	59	22	34	3	5	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	37	58	20	31	5	8	0	0

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.



14 June 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Priory Junior School, Gedling, NG4 3LE

A big thank you to everyone for the warm welcome you gave to the inspectors when we visited your school. We came to find out what the school does well and how it might be improved. This is what we found:

- your school is a good school and gives you a good standard of education
- you enjoy your lessons and work hard in them, making good progress
- the school is very caring and friendly, and everyone is encouraged to 'have a go' even if they make mistakes
- your behaviour is good and you act considerately towards each other and towards adults
- you have healthy lifestyles and say that the school makes sure you are safe
- the school makes sure that your parents and carers, and lots of other people, have the chance to support your education
- you enjoy having opportunities to take responsibility in your school and local community.

Although you progress well, we have suggested to your teachers that they should make sure you progress even better and reach even higher standards, particularly in writing. We have also said that your school should develop links with schools overseas so that you can appreciate at first hand the lives and lifestyles of other people.

It was a great pleasure to visit your school. You can make sure it goes from strength to strength by continuing to behave well and always doing your very best.

Yours sincerely

Richard Marsden

Lead inspector

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