

Priory Rise School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135272
Local Authority	Milton Keynes
Inspection number	341631
Inspection dates	7–8 December 2009
Reporting inspector	Rajinder Harrison

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 of pupils on the school roll	147
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms Kate Everall
Headteacher	Mrs Sue Cox
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	160 Bronte Avenue Tattenhoe Park MK4 3GE
Telephone number	01908 502572
Fax number	01908 507450
Email address	prioryrise@milton-keynes.gov.uk

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Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited eight lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff, pupils and parents. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documents, including school policies, the development plan, monitoring records, analyses of pupils' attainment and progress and reports from visits by the local authority. Inspectors analysed 44 questionnaires returned by parents and carers.

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

- Pupils' progress and the standards currently being attained across the school, particularly in writing.
- The quality of teaching, assessment and the curriculum.
- The effectiveness of leadership and management, particularly systems for monitoring, self-evaluation and development planning.

Information about the school

Priory Rise was designed to accommodate 420 pupils from two proposed housing developments that have been delayed due to the recession. Pupils currently come from homes further afield than the immediate locality. The school opened in September 2008 with 49 pupils aged between four and eight years. Pupils in these classes have continued to join at various times throughout the year and the school is not projected to have any Year 6 pupils until September 2010. With only 146 pupils at present, it is a smaller than the average sized primary school. While the majority of pupils are of White British origin, an above average proportion represents a diverse range of minority ethnic backgrounds. Many of these pupils come from homes where English is not the first language, but few are at an early stage of learning English. The school has a below average proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. Provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is in two classes: Reception and Nursery. Most children in the Nursery class attend part time.

The school also manages the before- and after-school provision (Early Birds and Night Owls), that caters for up to 16 pupils at each session.

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

Parents and carers and pupils are accurate in their views that Priory Rise is a good school. It is a very safe and spacious environment, much enhanced by the high quality artwork pupils have produced. Pupils are happy at school and feel valued, with one commenting, 'We are expected to behave well and respect others because everyone is important.' Pupils' exemplary behaviour and good achievement show that they value learning. These positive attributes, alongside the above average standards they attain, ensure pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Children start in the Nursery with the levels of skills expected for their age and progress well in the Early Years Foundation Stage because provision is good. Careful assessment and planning ensure that pupils of all abilities continue to achieve well in subsequent classes. In Year 5, pupils are working at above average levels in English, mathematics and science. Well-considered interventions to support pupils who fall behind their targets or have special educational needs and/or disabilities ensure that these pupils achieve well. Pupils learning English as a new language are supported well and progress as well as their classmates.

Teachers have an accurate understanding of pupils' different ability levels and plan lessons accordingly. Lessons are lively and engaging and pupils respond by doing their best. While pupils have individual targets and are regularly encouraged to check their work, a few do not fully understand their targets or the steps they need to take to succeed. Pupils appreciate the detailed guidance they receive through teachers' marking in literacy and numeracy to show them how well they have done and how to improve. This quality guidance is less evident in other subjects.

Pupils feel safe, and procedures to keep them safe are outstanding. Excellent pastoral care and good guidance and support ensure that all pupils develop well and learn confidently regardless of their individual circumstances or difficulties. The curriculum is well organised so pupils build successfully on previous learning and many enrichment activities make learning interesting and fun. Opportunities for pupils to extend their learning by working more independently, for example on investigations, are less well developed. The curriculum supports awareness of other cultures, faiths and traditions well. The school is a very harmonious community and pupils are respectful of people whose lives are different to their own. Links with diverse communities locally and further afield in this country are strong but links beyond Britain are rather more tentative.

The headteacher, supported effectively by staff and governors, has driven school development very effectively and has successfully established a culture of high expectations and high aspirations. The monitoring of teaching and learning is good.

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Self-evaluation is accurate. Governors are very supportive and have helped the school attain a high standing in the local community. In light of the school's significant strengths, leaders and managers demonstrate good capacity to improve the school further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards further by providing pupils with:
 - more opportunities to work independently, particularly through investigating and discovering for themselves
 - more guidance in subjects other than mathematics and literacy.
- Ensure pupils understand their targets by involving them more in identifying these targets and the next steps they need to take to achieve more.
- Ensure that the governing body does more to extend pupils' understanding of diverse communities in countries outside Britain.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils achieve well and learn effectively because they want to succeed. Their enjoyment is evident in the way they listen eagerly and settle to tasks promptly. They find learning especially exciting when they have opportunities to share their ideas and engage in lively question and answer sessions. When set probing questions, for example in science, they confidently reason and debate in order to solve problems. Such lessons buzz with excitement because everyone is involved and teachers' urgent time-keeping spurs pupils to complete tasks efficiently. Senior managers are quick to intervene when pupils fall behind their predicted targets and this ensures pupils catch up quickly. Current pupils in Years 2 and 5 are working at above average levels in all areas. Pupils who need additional help with their learning, including those new to learning English receive good support and achieve well.

Pupils form good relationships and their behaviour is outstanding. If problems arise, pupils are confident they can go to staff for support. They show respect for others by listening sensibly and this is echoed well during worship, a time where pupils, irrespective of their faith, regard with reverence. They understand well what they should do to stay healthy. Many enjoy healthy school meals and take regular exercise. They are enthusiastic about physical activities and the many clubs they can join like aerobics. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Older pupils adopt a mature attitude as they help around the school and look after younger ones at lunchtimes, commenting very wisely that 'We have to make sure they don't get upset or have an accident.' They express a sense of wonder as they learn about sustaining the earth's resources and recycling, 'so things don't run out', or delight as they splash through puddles. They talk enthusiastically about involvement in community events and fund-raising activities. While they are confident with each other and recognise that differences should be respected, a few are less sure about what life is like for children in other countries and want to know more.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
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	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is consistently good because teachers plan interesting lessons with activities that encourage pupils to think about their learning. Teachers use discussion between pupils well to give them time to share ideas and be more confident in their answers. For example, in a Year 2 lesson, pupils worked carefully and diligently to write instructions to make Santa's sack, and when unsure, sought help from each other. Effective use of interactive whiteboards helps pupils understand their learning particularly well. Teaching assistants are used well to support pupils who need additional help to participate fully. Occasionally, overlong presentations give a few pupils too much to think about, resulting in their being unsure about how to proceed when working independently. Similarly, opportunities are occasionally missed to give pupils enough time to come up with their own ideas and solutions to solve problems. While some marking is good, it is inconsistent and pupils are not always clear if they have met their targets or what they have to do to improve their work.

The curriculum is well organised to ensure that pupils build on previous work successfully. Good emphasis is placed on developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills

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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and hence they attain well. The curriculum provides a breadth of opportunities for pupils to explore, for example, art, music and physical education. Themed events and cross-curricular activities extend pupils' interests and learning well. Opportunities for pupils to work more independently by, for example, initiating their own ideas and designing investigations are not as evident. Modified plans, individual support and good resources allow pupils who need additional help with their learning to achieve well. Visitors and visits enrich pupils' experiences well and make learning come alive. Activities such as sports, musical instrument tuition and choir extend pupils' interests and skills well. Partnerships with others, such as sports providers and secondary schools, enrich learning further. A good personal, social, health education programme ensures that pupils understand, for example, how to stay safe, and the dangers of drug abuse. Care arrangements are outstanding. Parents and carers are very happy with the way their children settle into school and say that staff respond promptly if individuals need help. Parents and carers particularly value the additional care and support the school offers through its well-managed 'Early Birds and Night Owls' provision. Pupils who experience personal or academic difficulties are very well cared for and links with other agencies to support them are strong. The school's arrangements to support the many pupils who join the school throughout the year are very effective. Most parents and carers ensure their children attend school regularly. Despite the school's good efforts, a few pupils have too many absences and miss vital learning.

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?

School leaders and governors want pupils to be inspired in their learning and receive the best education possible. They are ambitious in their intent and expectations are high of pupils and staff. Leaders promote a strong sense of community in school. Pupils of all backgrounds and ability have the help they need to achieve successfully so the equality of opportunity is addressed well. All aspects of health and safety and child protection are good and arrangements to secure safeguarding are outstanding. The school has established a clear sense of purpose and direction with firm foundations laid to move the school forwards. Monitoring and evaluation procedures to support effective development planning are rigorous. For example, writing was identified as a relative weakness last year and standards have improved considerably this year. Pupils come from very diverse starting points, settle quickly and achieve well, largely due to the

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school's good work in promoting equality of opportunity. Pupils who fall behind their targets are identified early and receive the necessary support to catch up quickly.

The school has strong links with the church and the community the school serves. The school involves parents and carers well in supporting their children's learning. School leaders promote community cohesion very effectively locally and with communities in other areas of this country but links with other countries are less well developed.

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
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
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 enjoy school, form positive relationships and settle quickly because induction arrangements are good. Home visits prior to children starting strengthen relations between home and school and benefit learning effectively. Children who need specific help are supported sensitively. 'My child can't wait to get here. He loves it', is typical of parents' and carers' comments. Most children are confident learners and work well with others. They try new activities confidently because staff organise these well and make them appealing. For example, excellent planning resulted in children enacting the story, 'We're going on a bear hunt' with great joy and delight. Despite knowing the ending, finding the bear was always a fresh surprise. In both the Nursery and Reception classes, the learning environment, including the outside area, is attractive and exciting. Children play out in all weathers, experiment and explore excitedly and discover that 'crunching' is not the sound they make when they jump in water.

Provision and leadership and management are good. Children are very safe and well cared for. They achieve well in their learning and personal skills. Staff plan a good

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balance of activities that children choose and those led by adults. Children eagerly try everything and persevere even when tasks, such as writing, present a high level of challenge to some. Staff know the children well and group them appropriately for more formal sessions. Most work confidently; a few struggle to maintain interest and attention because presentations are occasionally too long and they find it hard to concentrate. Staff make careful notes of each child's progress and share information with parents appropriately. Occasionally, more-able children in the Nursery, well capable of further challenge, do not achieve all that they could because opportunities for them to work with reception-age children are limited. The school's assessment data show children attain above average levels at the end of the Reception Year.

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

Parents' and carers' views about the school are very positive. A few parents and carers raise concerns about how the school helps parents support their children's learning; that the school does not help their pupils have a healthy lifestyle and children in the Early Years Foundation Stage do not have enough physical education.

Inspectors agree with parents' and carers' positive views. The school regularly sends out information to parents about what parents can do to help their children learn at home and welcomes parents in school if they wish to raise any concerns or issues. The school does everything it can to help pupils adopt healthy lifestyles by informing them about healthy eating, providing healthy school meals and ensuring pupils have physical education lessons regularly including in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Priory Rise 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 44 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 147 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	36	82	8	18	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	40	91	4	9	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	27	61	16	36	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	32	73	11	25	1	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	37	84	7	16	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	30	68	11	25	3	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	29	66	13	30	2	5	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)	28	64	8	18	2	5	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	33	75	10	23	1	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	23	52	18	41	1	2	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	25	57	11	25	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	35	80	9	20	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	39	89	5	11	0	0	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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

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 were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

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.



9 December 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Priory Rise School, Milton Keynes, MK4 3GE

Thank you for making us welcome and for being so friendly and polite when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed talking with you. I am writing to tell you what we found out. You said that you enjoy school, particularly the visits you go on and the clubs you can join. You said that you have many good friends at school and that you like your teachers. You also said you like your school because everything is new and that you have lots of space to play in. I was very impressed by the lovely way older pupils look after younger ones at lunchtimes and we were impressed by the beautiful artwork you have done.

There are many good things about your school. These include your excellent behaviour and good understanding of how to live a healthy lifestyle. You work hard at school and enjoy learning. You make good progress and many of you are working at above average standards in literacy, mathematics and science. Your lessons are interesting and the school takes excellent care of you. Although many of you have joined the school from so many other schools, it is good to see you have settled well and that you are especially kind in welcoming new children who join your classes.

While these aspects of your school are good, the inspectors think that a few things could be better. We have asked the headteacher, other staff and governors to do the following to improve the school:

- To give you more opportunities to work independently, especially on your investigations, so that you do even better.
- To give you more advice about how well you are doing in subjects other than mathematics and literacy and to involve you in setting you targets that you understand.
- To do more to help you learn about what life is like for people who live in other countries.

There are things you could do to help too. For example, you could make sure that you do your best to achieve your targets and ask for harder work if it is too easy.

Yours sincerely

Rajinder Harrison

Lead inspector

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