

Priory Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118416
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	358342
Inspection dates	14–15 September 2010
Reporting inspector	Eileen Chadwick

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	178
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rob Crook
Headteacher	Tracey Jones
Date of previous school inspection	27 February 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They visited 12 lessons and 7 teachers were observed. Inspectors also held meetings with pupils, staff with key responsibilities and representatives of the governing body. In addition to observing the school's work and evaluating documentation such as policies, the school improvement plan, pupils' work and records of their learning and progress, inspectors examined 43 completed questionnaires from parents and carers.

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

- how consistently well pupils develop their key skills from the Early Years Foundation Stage through to Year 2
- whether the school is continuing to raise attainment for the current Year 2 pupils
- reasons why so many pupils have special educational needs in literacy and what the school is doing to raise their attainment and to reduce this number
- the impact of the new leadership team in raising attainment and driving school improvement.

Information about the school

This school, which is slightly below average in size, serves a mixed area very close to the town centre. An average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities is high and the number with statements of educational need is above average. These pupils' difficulties are mainly speech, literacy, numeracy, emotional and behavioural. The headteacher and deputy headteacher were appointed in September 2009 during a year when there were several long-term absences of other teaching staff. The school has gained several awards, including Healthy Schools.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is made up of two Reception classes. The school provides a breakfast club for its pupils, which the governing body manage. The after-school club and the pre-school, which is situated next to the school, are privately managed and as such are not part of this inspection.

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

Priory Infant School is a good school which is quickly improving under the very good leadership of the headteacher. She is well supported by her senior leadership team. The school keeps pupils exceptionally safe and they learn in a very attractive, well-resourced and carefully organised environment. Pupils' attendance and behaviour are good because they are very well cared for and enjoy school. Excellent relationships at all levels and pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development make their school very welcoming. Very thorough checks on pupils' progress support their rising attainment. Parents are often delighted with their children's progress, with one expressing the view that 'Priory Infants is a wonderful learning environment where staff care about every aspect of our child's development.'

□

Pupils achieve well. Since the last inspection, the school has consolidated its strengths and is driving up pupils' academic performance from starting points that are below those seen in most schools. Children's good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage is built upon well in Key Stage 1 so that by the end of Year 2, pupils' attainment is average in reading, writing, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT). The strong emphasis given to developing pupils' speaking helps to lay a secure foundation for all their learning. Enhanced systems for teaching reading are raising pupils' reading attainment, which was significantly above average for the last academic year for both boys and girls. However, fewer girls than boys reached higher levels in mathematics. This is a school focus for improvement and the school has also correctly identified the need for potentially more capable pupils to write at length in Year 2. □

□

The overall quality of teaching and learning is good, although not yet consistent. The steps taken to improve the teaching of sounds and letters (phonics) are having a strong impact on raising attainment in literacy for all groups of pupils. However, in other class literacy sessions, some pupils, particularly those who find learning more difficult, are not always given enough opportunity on occasions to apply their reading, phonics and writing skills across a range of subjects. There are also instances when work is insufficiently challenging for more capable pupils.

□ Through honest and accurate self-evaluation, leaders are bringing about many improvements. There is a very thorough cycle of self-evaluation, and senior and middle leaders and other staff rigorously use the school-wide tracking system to accurately measure pupils' progress and identify any gaps in progress towards their demanding targets. Given its record of recent improvements, the school has a good capacity to

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continue to progress and to fulfil its ambitious vision for the future. Senior leadership roles have developed well this year and governors make a good contribution to the school's future. The school has recovered well from staffing inconsistencies and this is seen in pupils' rising attainment, for instance in reading.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment for more able girls in mathematics and for all more able pupils in writing by:
 - increasing the proportion of girls reaching higher levels in mathematics so it is in line with their reading attainment
 - giving more extended writing opportunities, especially in Year 2.
- Strengthen the quality and consistency of teaching and learning still further by:
 - ensuring that in class literacy lessons, lower attaining pupils are always given opportunities for rigorously applying their reading, phonics and writing skills in a wide range of subjects.
 - ensuring more capable pupils are always fully challenged by the tasks provided for them

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

Pupils' good behaviour and positive attitudes contribute much to their effective learning. Their successful development of early reading skills is having a strong impact on raising overall achievement. For example, in a good phonics lesson observed in Year 2, no time was lost because both pupils and teaching staff were very familiar with routines and pupils were helped to think hard and consolidate new learning skills. The skilful match to pupils' prior attainment in speaking, sounds, letters and reading ensured all pupils learned at a good pace. Ability grouping enables those who need extra challenge work to work at higher levels and for those who find learning more difficult to be taught with smaller learning steps.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve well, although a significant proportion have literacy and numeracy needs because of earlier underachievement. The school is working hard to reduce this number through very effective intervention procedures and improvements in teaching. Those with emotional and behavioural difficulties are helped very well, and incidents of poor behaviour are rare.

On entry to Year 1, pupils' attainment is still somewhat below average, despite their overall good progress in the Reception classes. Boys often enter school with weaker attainment than girls, including in communication, language and literacy and concentration skills. By Year 2, they have caught up due to strong intervention

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procedures and a curriculum which encourages their good progress and keenness to learn.

□

Pupils enjoy the activities provided and respond well to the calm and supportive atmosphere generated by adults, and they feel safe. They are happy in school and confident that any concerns shared with adults will be quickly sorted out. By Year 2, pupils have developed into confident and well-rounded learners with good social skills. Pupils show respect for others and for cultural differences. They are keen advocates of healthy lifestyles and this is reflected in the school's national award. They contribute well to their school and local community, and are beginning to have a greater voice in the school and starting to make decisions about their learning. Pupils are making good progress in learning about the world of work and this, together with their satisfactory attainment in literacy and numeracy, is providing pupils with a sound basis for their economic well-being.

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	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	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

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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There are many consistent features of good teaching in the school, for example detailed planning, positive relationships, clear explanations and activities that are interesting and enjoyable. Teachers manage pupils very well and pupils understand their high expectations for behaviour. They use resources and new technology creatively to make learning more interesting. There is a good emphasis on learning for a purpose and this brings relevance to their learning. Assessment is very thorough overall but, where teaching is only satisfactory, it is not always used for ensuring that more able pupils are consistently challenged. On occasions, insufficient attention is given to enabling lower attaining pupils to apply their basic skills. Classroom assistants make an important contribution to lessons by providing effective levels of support for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and they also ensure that pupils are given the opportunity to develop independence.

The curriculum has recently been overhauled and is used well to promote good links between subjects from Reception to Year 2. Increased opportunities for pupils to use literacy and numeracy in all subjects are having a positive impact on pupils' attainment. The systematic use of computers also makes a significant contribution to accelerating pupils' progress. Their experiences are enriched and extended through a good range of visits, visitors and after-school clubs, and the breakfast club is well attended and gives pupils a good start to the school day. Effective partnerships with other schools enrich pupils' learning.

The school has a very clear understanding of the circumstances of pupils and their families. This, and the improved use of assessment data, is particularly valuable in enabling leaders to identify the precise difficulties faced by pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, who receive carefully tailored intervention programmes. The support of other agencies is sought where needed. The school works tirelessly to involve parents in their children's education, and the impact of this is good. Induction arrangements when children join are strong, whilst transfer to junior school is an improving area. For example, there is now a writing project to help bridge the gap from Year 2 to Year 3.

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 headteacher leads the school with a very clear direction. Senior leaders are successful in inspiring all members of the school to share a strong purpose and to work

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effectively as a team. The very thorough arrangements for self-evaluation give leaders a very clear view of how well the school is performing and what requires improvement. The improvement plan has a clear focus on improving pupils' outcomes. Regular monitoring and evaluation of teaching are effective in improving provision and raising standards. Performance management is successfully linked to academic success. The headteacher is empowering leaders at all levels, but staffing changes mean that several middle leaders are new to their roles and still receiving training to equip them to play their full part. The governing body is well led, has a clear understanding of the school's qualities and is fully involved in planning for the future; it provides support and challenge in equal measure.

The school has excellent arrangements for safeguarding the welfare of pupils and for making sure those working with them are properly vetted. Staff and governors take their duties to promote equal opportunities seriously and leaders ensure discrimination of any sort is not tolerated; they are working to ensure that the most able have consistently challenging opportunities, as there is still some unevenness in this in the school. Nonetheless, the careful tracking and evaluation of pupils' needs ensure all groups make good progress as they move through the school. The school makes a strong contribution to community cohesion locally and is involved well with wider communities in this country. The school is currently developing its global links.

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

Reception children had not yet started school as the inspection occurred early in the

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new academic year. □It was therefore not possible to directly observe the teaching of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Evidence was obtained from reviewing children's assessments, previous work and observing children's competences on entry to Year 1. Teachers' planning, classroom provision, discussions with teachers and the school's own monitoring of teaching records were also evaluated.

□Induction arrangements, built on strong links with home, are very carefully planned to enable children to settle quickly. Children's skills, knowledge and understanding on entry to Reception are below the expected levels. Children make good progress. The strong focus on developing children's language and personal skills enables them to make particularly good progress in these areas. Good planning ensures there is an increasing balance between activities the children select for themselves and adult-led learning. Planning shows that all required areas of learning for indoors and outdoors are fully covered. Once children have settled and initial assessments are complete, they are taught in groups for learning the basics. This enables work to be more closely matched to their previous skills. Both classrooms and outdoor areas are spacious and well resourced. There are some exciting opportunities for learning through purposeful play, including role play linked to themes from stories. A very strong emphasis is given to children's welfare and safety. The provision is well led and assessment information is used well to guide planning and check every child's 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

A total of 43 parents and carers responded to the questionnaire. There were no responses from Reception because these children had not yet begun school. Analysis of the responses received showed much in support of the school and there were no major areas of concern. Parents and carers say their children really enjoy school. They are pleased with their children's progress, the quality of teaching and the way the school keeps their children safe. The inspection team endorses these areas. Parents and carers raised only a very small number of concerns and these followed no particular pattern. These were investigated by inspectors who found no direct evidence to support these views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Priory Infant 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 43 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 178 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	34	79	9	21	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	36	84	7	16	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	25	58	16	37	2	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	24	56	18	42	1	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	32	74	10	23	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	29	67	12	28	2	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	28	67	15	35	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)	29	67	14	33	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	27	63	12	28	1	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	25	58	16	37	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	27	63	12	28	3	7	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	32	74	12	26	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	35	81	8	19	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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 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.



16 September 2010

Dear Children

Inspection of Priory Infant School, Ramsgate CT11 9XT

Thank you very much for your friendliness and help when we visited your school recently. We really enjoyed finding out about how much you like school and learning about the interesting things you do.

First, you need to know your school is a good one. Here are some of the many other things your school does well:

- You make good progress and, by the time you leave in Year 2, you are learning your sounds and letters particularly well, and this helps you to read well.
- Those of you in Reception get off to a good start.
- You help to make your school a happy one because you are helpful, work hard and behave well.
- You have many interesting learning opportunities for outside visits and clubs.
- You understand the importance of eating healthy foods and keeping fit.
- Your headteacher leads you all very well and all the staff and governors are working hard to make your school even better.
- Staff take very good care of you. You get extra help if you need it so you can learn new things as quickly as possible.

This is what we are asking your school to do to improve:

- Make sure those of you who find learning easy do a bit better in mathematics, especially some of the girls.
- Make sure those of you in Year 2 have more chances for writing longer stories and accounts.

- Make sure your work is never too easy and you always have good chances to practise your sounds and letters, reading and writing skills in different subjects as well as literacy lessons.

We hope you will continue to enjoy school and continue to work hard in all you do.

Yours sincerely

Eileen Chadwick

Lead inspector

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