

# Priory School

Orchard Avenue, Slough, Berkshire, SL1 6HE

## Inspection dates

21–22 March 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- The progress pupils make in English and mathematics has not been rapid enough and so pupils' achievement is not yet good.
- The quality of teaching over time has been too variable. As a result, pupils have not made enough progress for achievement to be good overall.
- Senior leaders and members of the governing body have not fully ensured that leaders in charge of subjects contribute enough to improving standards, through checking information on pupils' progress, and the quality of teaching and learning.
- In the Reception classes, children are not always supported effectively in learning when they choose activities for themselves.
- Pupils are not provided with clear personal targets that link closely to the work they are doing.
- Teachers' use of questioning does not always provide opportunities for pupils to be stretched and challenged to extend their understanding.

### The school has the following strengths

- The behaviour of pupils is good and they work positively in lessons. Pupils feel safe in school and are looked after well.
- Children make good progress in the Nursery.
- The pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is well supported by the school's use of creative learning activities.
- The school is strongly committed to supporting pupils with a wide range of disabilities and special educational needs, some of whom have profound disabilities.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 35 lessons. They also watched a whole-school assembly.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, the Chair and other members of the Governing Body, and senior and middle leaders. The inspectors also met with a local authority adviser.
- The inspectors listened to pupils read and looked at samples of the pupils' workbooks.
- The inspectors looked at a wide range of documents, including the school's own information on pupils' recent progress, planning and monitoring documentation, and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding arrangements.
- The inspectors took into account the 81 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). The inspectors held discussions with parents and carers when they came into school during the school's 'Mums Visit School' day. The responses to 45 staff questionnaires were also considered.

## Inspection team

David Hogg, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Heidi Boreham	Additional inspector
Michael Buist	Additional inspector
David Westall	Additional inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Priory School is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium is below average. This is additional government funding for looked after children, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and pupils with a parent in the armed services.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is double the national average, as is the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils or those with special educational needs who are supported at school action is below the national average. The proportion supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is a little above the national average.
- The school includes and manages additional resource units with places for 60 pupils. Currently, the Treehouse supports ten pupils with emotional and behavioural disorders (EBD), ten with communication and language needs and there is a special needs resource unit with provision for 14 children with complex physical, medical and sensory needs. The school also offers extended care for children before and after school.
- In September 2012, two new deputy headteachers were appointed. A new special educational needs leader was appointed in January 2013.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so it is consistently good and results in pupils making faster progress, by:
  - making sure that teachers set personalised targets for pupils that are linked to the activities they are currently working on, so pupils are able to identify more clearly what they must do to improve their work
  - ensuring that teachers use questioning to assess learning during lessons and to provide greater challenge to pupils, especially the most able
  - providing clear and focused explanations of the learning activities, so that pupils can begin working on their tasks more quickly.
- Improve the provision in the Reception classes by adults offering more focused support and guiding learning when children are working on activities they have chosen themselves.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
  - senior leaders and governors make sure that middle leaders play a greater, more-effective role in checking the impact of teaching and learning across the school, and developing their skills in analysing information on pupils' progress

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Over time, pupils' achievement has not been good. The proportion of pupils making the expected progress is below average, although attainment is broadly in line with national averages. The school's own information on achievement indicates that progress is now broadly in line with national expectations and, within that, some groups of pupils are making good progress.
- The school's current information on achievement is now more robust and accurate than that previously used. Senior leaders working with consultants are now more confident that information on Early Years and key stage achievement is accurate. Moderation sessions with other schools are now in place to ensure the accuracy of the school's assessments.
- Information on the progress of pupils is now being used more effectively to identify those pupils who may need extra support or additional challenge to stretch them. Pupils' progress meetings are held with members of the senior leadership team, year leaders and class teachers to ensure the progress of specific groups of learners is closely checked.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is generally in line with that of other pupils in most year groups. Those pupils with more profound needs are integrated into the mainstream classes for most of their day. Although attainment for some of these pupils is much lower, their progress is in line with that of other pupils.
- Pupils in receipt of additional support through the pupil premium grant make similar progress to other pupils, with some pupils beginning to make more rapid progress. The effectiveness of in-class support and small-group work is checked closely to make sure that outcomes for these pupils are improving. Results from national assessment tests indicate that attainment for pupils in receipt of additional funding was less than three months behind in English and mathematics when compared with other pupils.
- Other groups such as those pupils who speak English as an additional language make at least expected progress or better due to well-targeted support and intervention work from teaching assistants and class teachers.
- Children enter Nursery a little below national expectations and, through good teaching and engaging activities, make good progress by the time they enter Reception. Although the school has made recent changes which provide greater opportunities for pupils to choose their learning activities progress does slow during Reception as staff do not always guide learning well enough. By the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, attainment is broadly in line with national expectations.
- The teaching of reading is well organised with pupils able to use their knowledge of letters and sounds (phonics) effectively to build and read unfamiliar words. Phonics lessons are well organised and structured to enable pupils to work at their own level. Although the pupils in Year 1 did poorly in the national phonics screening check in 2012, the school's own information shows that this year pupils have a better understanding of letters and sounds.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Over time, the quality of teaching and learning has been too variable and has not resulted in good achievement. The senior leadership team has taken action to eliminate inadequate teaching and there are now signs of improvement. Pupils feel their teachers try to make learning fun and enjoyable.
- Teachers try to provide clear guidance to pupils on what they are expected to achieve. However, on occasions, these discussions can be rather too long or not clear enough for pupils to have a good understanding of the task. This slows the pace of the lesson and can reduce the progress pupils make.
- On occasions, teachers do not use questioning to assess learning, or to stretch pupils,

particularly the more able, to think more deeply about ideas.

- Pupils' work is generally well marked. New systems using coloured highlighters identify aspects of the work that is of good quality and areas to develop further. Pupils feel this is a simple but clear way of identifying how they can improve their work. However, pupils are not given precise personal targets, linked to the work they are doing. As a result, pupils do not always have a clear enough understanding of how they are to improve and how to make more rapid progress.
- Where teaching is best, activities are well planned and the work set is at the right level of difficulty for each pupil. Pupils are given the opportunity to work in pairs or groups, and often make good progress as a result. Pupils with physical disabilities, and communication and language needs, are well integrated into lessons and engage well with the learning activities. They are supported effectively by teaching assistants but some are able to learn independently without additional support.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

- Pupils at Priory School feel safe and well looked after. Incidents of bullying or unkindness are rare and pupils say that staff are available to help them if necessary. The pupils' feeling that behaviour is generally good is echoed by staff, parents and carers.
- In lessons, pupils get on well with their learning and are interested in the activities teachers provide. Pupils demonstrate good skills in group work and can work together on tasks for extended periods of time.
- Pupils are confident to present their work to each other, as demonstrated in two Year 6 classes where groups wrote their own Second World War propaganda messages. Pupils' attitudes to each other's work are good, as they can sensitively and thoughtfully provide helpful advice and criticism. Relationships are good within the classrooms.
- Pupils have a good understanding of personal safety including safe use of the internet. They value the friendships they forge across cultural boundaries and say that, despite the school being large, 'it has a family atmosphere'.
- Clubs and extra-curricular activities are appreciated by the pupils. The school provides opportunities for pupils to take part in sporting activities as well as creative and cultural activities. Music and drama productions are a strength within the school.
- Over recent years, the school has worked with parents, carers and outside agencies successfully to improve attendance of pupils, which is now broadly average.

### **The leadership and management** require improvement

- Since the last inspection, the school's leadership has not been able to secure improvements to pupils' achievement in English and mathematics.
- New members of the senior leadership team are now supporting them in raising the quality of teaching and learning. There are indications that their work is beginning to have an effect. However, the improvements have not had time to make a significant impact on raising achievement.
- The vision held by the headteacher is supported by all members of staff and the governing body. Senior leaders and governors have a clear understanding of the strengths of the school and the areas that require improvement. Through rigorous self-review, staff training is now geared to improving the quality of teaching. Improvements are already evident, for example in the quality of lesson planning.
- The school has developed effective appraisal and performance management systems to hold teachers to account for pupils' outcomes. More-effective staff training and observations of teaching have helped to eradicate inadequate teaching from the school. The school has the capacity to improve further.
- New tracking and monitoring systems have been brought in and are beginning to be used well to

identify any pupils who may be falling behind. However, the analysis and review of pupils' progress still remains the role of the senior team. Subject leaders are not yet fully involved in using information on pupils' progress, or in checking the quality of teaching and learning.

- The local authority is effectively helping to support the development of governors' understanding of information on pupils' achievement, and to help the senior leaders improve the quality of teaching.
- School leaders recognise that, in the past, not enough attention has been paid to developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. This is now being tackled and pupils are starting to make better progress as a result.
- The school makes good use of partnerships to enrich the learning activities that take place in the classrooms. The expertise of practitioners from the creative industries provides a wide range of opportunities in drama, music, art and film-making. The creative curriculum contributes to the pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school promotes inclusion very effectively and works to ensure that all of its pupils, some of whom have profound needs and disabilities, are integrated into lessons and school life. The school is strongly committed to equality of opportunity for all learners. The specialist resource unit is well managed.
- The school now tracks the progress of those pupils in receipt of additional support through the pupil premium grant more effectively and is now beginning to review the effectiveness of the additional resources in securing better outcomes for these pupils. The school developed a range of interventions to support pupils in small groups or in one-to-one intensive work to raise attainment. Other aspects of support include nurture groups to build social skills and self-esteem, and to provide increased family liaison work to support vulnerable families.
- A number of parents and carers who responded to the online survey (Parent View) raised concerns about aspects of their children's learning and the communication between the school and parents and carers. The school is working to address these concerns through meetings and events such as the 'Mums Visit School' day', which provided opportunities for parents and carers to sit in on lessons and watch and their children in the classroom.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governance is improving. Members of the governing body are able to draw on a range of experience outside education and support the headteacher in her efforts to move the school forwards. They are able to use information provided by the school to discuss issues surrounding pupils' progress, for example the school's efforts to close the gaps in attainment for those pupils in receipt of additional pupil premium funding. The level of challenge they offer is growing, but governors rely on the school to provide analysis of the progress pupils make because they are still developing their own skills and confidence in reviewing data. That said, the governing body has a good understanding of the strengths of the school and areas still requiring further improvement. Training opportunities offered by the local authority have been taken and work done with the school improvement adviser has given the governors a greater insight into the role of being a governor. The governors play an active role within school, making regular visits. The finances of the school are monitored carefully to ensure that funding is effectively allocated. Some governors join the headteacher during staff appraisal meetings and the governing body as a whole has a good awareness and understanding of how teachers' performance is linked to the levels of promotion and salary. The governors monitor safeguarding procedures and policies as required and ensure they meet statutory requirements.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	110089
<b>Local authority</b>	Slough
<b>Inspection number</b>	401101

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	860
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Ian Smyth
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jacqueline Laver
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	3–4 December 2009
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