

Old Priory Junior Academy

The Ridgeway, Plympton, Plymouth, PL7 1QN

Inspection dates 16—17 October 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected as an academy
	This inspection:	Inadequate 4
Leadership and management	Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching	Inadequate	4
Achievement of pupils	Inadequate	4

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires special measures.

- Pupils' progress, from their starting points, is significantly below that of other pupils nationally by the time they leave school and this is not being addressed rigorously enough.
- Pupils make inadequate progress in Years 3 and 4 and they do not make up the shortfall in Years 5 and 6.
- School leaders do not know how well different groups of pupils are doing because they do not monitor or analyse pupils' progress regularly enough. As a result, expectations for pupils' achievement are too low.
- Too little has been done to improve the quality of teaching and to ensure that pupils' learning improves, particularly in writing and mathematics.
- The governing body does not have the necessary systems and information to hold school leaders to account, especially about the achievement of pupils and the quality of teaching.
- Additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils is not being used effectively. Consequently, the gaps between these pupils' attainment and that of other pupils are not closing quickly enough.
- Too little is being done to train leaders and teachers to carry out their roles effectively. Staff lack confidence in the way the school is led and managed.
- Teachers do not always expect enough of pupils, especially the most able, or plan lessons that enable pupils to build upon what they already know.
- Pupils' work is not marked often enough and teachers do not always check pupils' understanding during lessons. Consequently, pupils are not always sure about how well they are doing and how to improve their work.
- Pupils do not behave well in poorly planned or dull lessons.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils are happy at school. As a result, attendance is well above the national average.
- Pupils, particularly disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, benefit from the many sporting and physical activities that the school provides.
- Pupils feel safe, show consideration to one another and behave very well when moving around the school.
- Teachers are eager to improve and to have more opportunities to develop their teaching skills.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 15 lessons, including during joint observations with senior leaders.
- The inspectors also visited classrooms for shorter periods. They looked at pupils' current work, as well as scrutinising pupils' English and mathematics books from the previous year. Inspectors also heard a sample of pupils read in Years 3 and 6.
- Inspectors examined a range of documents and policies, including the school's own data on pupils' attainment and progress, the school's plans for improvement and its procedures for keeping pupils safe. They also considered the governing body minutes and records relating to behaviour and attendance.
- Meetings were held with pupils, staff members of the governing body and senior leaders.
- Inspectors took account of the 67 responses to the online Parent View survey, conversations with parents during the inspection and correspondence from parents, as well as responses to the school's own parental survey.
- The views of members of staff were analysed through the 25 responses to the staff questionnaire and letters to inspectors.

Inspection team

David Howley, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Terence Payne

Additional Inspector

Anne Wesley

Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

Information about this school

- Old Priory Junior Academy is similar in size to the average primary school.
- Very few pupils attending the school are from a minority ethnic background.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is in line with the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are being supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly similar to the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported through the pupil premium (additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and looked after children) is below the national average. About one in every 14 pupils is eligible for the pupil premium.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Old Priory Junior School converted to become an Academy school in February 2012. When its predecessor school, with the same name, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- The previous headteacher retired in July 2013. The deputy headteacher was appointed as acting headteacher for one year and another deputy headteacher was temporarily seconded from another school for the same period. In February 2014, the retired headteacher was appointed as interim headteacher from September 2014 until July 2015.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, so that it is at least good, by ensuring that teachers:
 - have the necessary support and training to improve the quality of their teaching
 - plan lessons that build on what pupils already know, in order to set higher expectations for the rate at which pupils, especially the most able, progress
 - check pupils' understanding in lessons so that teachers can reshape tasks and ensure that all groups of pupils are making good progress
 - mark pupils' work regularly, and ensure that pupils know what to do to improve their work and that they respond to teachers' advice
 - set high expectations for pupils' behaviour in lessons.
- Improve pupils' achievement across the school, and especially in writing and mathematics in Years 3 and 4, by ensuring that pupils:
 - have enough opportunities to write at length and to practise their writing skills
 - fully understand mathematical concepts and have wider opportunities to apply them, in order to develop their competence.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, including the ability of governors to hold the school to account, by ensuring that:
 - senior leaders have more accurate information on pupils' attainment and progress, and use it to set higher expectations for pupils' achievement and teachers' performance
 - funding for disadvantaged pupils is used effectively to enable these pupils to catch up with their peers
 - the most-able pupils, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs receive the help they require to make the best possible progress
 - senior and middle leaders have the necessary skills to drive improvement and that governors have the

information they need to hold leaders rigorously to account

- leaders follow plans to improve the quality of teaching and that they evaluate more rigorously the impact of actions taken
- leaders, together with governors, take effective steps to gain the full confidence of the staff, in order to enable the school to improve quickly.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are inadequate

- School leaders do not demonstrate the capacity to bring about necessary improvements at a rapid enough pace. Too little is being done to address the inadequate progress that pupils make.
- Senior leaders do not monitor or analyse the attainment and progress of different groups of pupils often enough; they do not have an accurate picture of how well different groups of pupils are doing. In addition, they do not provide governors with the information that they need to hold leaders to account.
- Leaders do not promote equality of opportunity for pupils effectively. Senior leaders are not ensuring that disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and disadvantaged pupils are achieving as well as their peers. They are not using the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils effectively enough, and are not checking its impact. Likewise, leaders do not ensure that the most-able pupils progress rapidly enough.
- Plans to improve the quality of teaching are not being fully implemented and leaders do not evaluate the impact of their actions sufficiently. Leaders' expectations for the performance of teachers and how well their pupils will achieve are too low. Teachers are eager to improve their skills but too many feel that they do not receive the training and support that they need. Not enough is being done to support teachers who are new to the profession and inspectors strongly recommend that the academy should not seek to appoint newly qualified teachers.
- The interim headteacher has not sustained previous initiatives to improve teaching or to ensure that senior leaders are able to use data well enough to monitor the attainment and progress of pupils.
- Subject leaders have too little opportunity to monitor and improve the effectiveness of the areas for which they are responsible and their skills as leaders are not being developed well enough. The majority of staff who responded to the staff questionnaire did not feel that the school is well led and managed. There is no shared vision of how to improve the work of the school.
- The school does not work closely enough with other schools to help drive improvement, other than to ensure that teachers' assessments of pupils' work are accurate. There is little evidence of action against the areas for improvement identified by the school's external consultant.
- The way in which subjects are organised has not yet improved the rate at which pupils progress. Pupils enjoy subjects such as history and geography because they find the topics interesting. Sports funding is used effectively, especially for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. These pupils benefit from the increased number of sporting and physical activities that the school provides.
- School leaders ensure that the school is a safe place and the overwhelming majority of parents who responded to the Parent View questionnaire agreed that their children are happy and safe at school. However, a small minority feel that the school is not well led and managed, and that it does not respond to their concerns.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has not shown the necessary diligence, nor has it put systems in place, to enable it to have an accurate view of the school's performance and to hold leaders to account. Governors do not have the information they need to check how well different groups of pupils are achieving, especially where pupils' progress is at its weakest. They do not check that the funding for disadvantaged pupils is used effectively. Governors are not sufficiently involved in school self-evaluation or setting priorities for improvement. They do not question leaders enough about improving the quality of teaching, and are unclear about how targets are set for teachers and how financial rewards are given. Governors recognise that, as a group, they do not carry the full confidence of the staff. Communication, both within school and with parents, is not good enough. Governors make sure that statutory requirements are in place to keep pupils safe.

The behaviour and safety of pupils requires improvement

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary around the school but this is not always maintained in lessons that are poorly planned. The large majority of pupils spoken to said that in such lessons behaviour is 'mixed' and sometimes disrupts their learning. Though most of the time pupils are keen to learn, occasionally, their attention drifts when the work is not challenging enough. Consequently, pupils do not always progress as quickly as they should.

- Pupils are considerate of one another and they behave very sensibly when they move around the school or when in the playground. They quickly respond to adults' instructions and requests, for example at the end of break time or when attending assemblies.
- The school's records show that racist name-calling is rare and dealt with promptly. Pupils learn about and are respectful of other religions and cultures. This contributes to the good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development that the school provides in preparing pupils for life in modern British society.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Adults diligently ensure pupils' safety and pupils are confident that they are safe. Pupils learn how to keep safe, both in and out of school, including when using the internet.
- Attendance is well above the national average because pupils are happy and enjoy coming to school. Senior leaders have worked successfully to improve pupils' attendance.
- Pupils are knowledgeable about bullying, including cyber-bullying. Those spoken to felt that there is 'no real bullying' in school and that adults deal quickly with any name-calling and disputes.
- Pupils say that there is always someone available to help them with any problem. Adults in the school are trained in how to keep pupils safe and know how to recognise signs which indicate that pupils may be at risk. The school's policy for safeguarding pupils, however, is not fully up to date.

The quality of teaching

is inadequate

- Too little teaching is of sufficiently high quality to ensure that pupils make consistently good progress from their starting points. Not all teachers set high enough expectations for pupils' learning. As a result, too many pupils are content with the rate at which they learn and do not strive to improve. Similarly, too few pupils are aware of the standards to which they could aspire.
- Teachers' planning does not always take account of what pupils already know. Consequently, tasks do not always stretch pupils enough and the work is often too easy. This is especially so for the most-able pupils and it slows down their learning.
- Teachers do not mark pupils' work regularly enough and, as a result, pupils are not always clear about what they have learned and what they have not yet mastered. Where marking is more regular, pupils are not given time to act upon teachers' advice. Likewise, teachers do not always make further checks to ensure that pupils have improved their understanding.
- Teachers do not always check pupils' understanding during lessons in order to reshape tasks when necessary, especially in mathematics. However, since the school recently changed how it teaches writing and mathematics, lessons include more purposeful tasks.
- Pupils do not often write at length in English lessons. Consequently, they have limited opportunities to practise their writing skills. Pupils say they enjoy writing more in subjects that are linked to topics because they have more interesting things to write about.
- The teaching of reading is more successful than that of writing because lessons consolidate and build more effectively on pupils' existing skills. As a result, weaker readers develop more quickly. More-competent readers show enthusiasm for reading and recognise its importance. For example, Year 6 readers know how punctuation affects the meaning of sentences.
- Other adults who support teachers ensure that pupils with disabilities or special educational needs are able to fully engage and learn in lessons.

The achievement of pupils

is inadequate

- Pupils make inadequate progress because of inadequate teaching and because leaders and managers do not have an accurate view of how well pupils are doing.
- Pupils enter Year 3 with attainment significantly above the national average, but do not build on this well enough as they move through the school. Consequently, pupils are no longer achieving better than others nationally when they move to secondary school. This was the position in the year before the school converted to an academy and the academy has not improved upon this.
- In 2013, Year 6 pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics remained significantly below average and current pupils' work does not indicate that this is improving rapidly enough.

- Pupils make inadequate progress in writing and mathematics in Years 3 and 4. They make better progress in Years 5 and 6, but this is not always rapid enough to enable them to make up lost ground.
- Senior leaders do not have enough information on the achievement of groups of pupils. Consequently, they do not know whether or not the achievement of different groups is improving. This includes the attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, as well as the most-able pupils.
- The extra funding for disadvantaged pupils is not used well enough to ensure that it enables individual pupils to make good progress from their starting points. At the end of Year 6 in 2013, the attainment of disadvantaged pupils was six terms behind that of other pupils in the school and other pupils nationally in reading, five terms in writing and four terms in mathematics. These gaps were wider than in the previous year.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs at the end of Year 6 in 2013 was in line with that of other pupils in the school. Pupils within this group are now achieving well in lessons. Although information on individual pupils shows a mixed picture, some are making very rapid progress.
- The school does not monitor how well the most-able pupils are doing. At the end of Year 6 in 2013, the standards reached by pupils who had attained highly at the end of Year 2 were in line with those reached by similar pupils nationally. However, both in lessons observed and in pupils' books, there are too many examples of work which is not challenging enough so that little progress is made.

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

Unique reference number	137876
Inspection number	443994

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	253
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Adrian Manuell
Interim headteacher	Robert Phippen
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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