

Priory Roman Catholic Primary School

St Catherine's Road, St Marychurch, Torquay, Devon TQ1 4NZ

Inspection dates

11–12 October 2016

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Inadequate
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Inadequate
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Over time, leaders have held too generous a view of the school's performance. Judgements about pupils' progress have not been based on broad and accurate evidence.
- Plans to improve the school are not sharp enough to have an impact. Senior leaders bear all the responsibility for improvement because middle leadership has not been developed.
- The progress pupils make in mathematics and writing is weak and standards are too low. The weakest progress is made by disadvantaged pupils. The use of additional funding to support these pupils has had little impact.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make better progress but in whole-class lessons, teachers do not generally meet these pupils' needs with the right level of work.
- Leaders have not done enough to tackle shortcomings in teaching. Teaching is inadequate. Work is not set at the right level for pupils to make enough progress and reach at least national standards.
- Teachers do not check frequently enough that pupils understand the work they are given.
- There is little challenge for the most able pupils. Teaching is not planned to enable them to exceed the expected standards, particularly in mathematics and writing.
- Pupils waste time in some lessons and become distracted because they are bored. This is reflected in the poor presentation of their work.
- Governors challenge leaders about the school's performance but do not have a clear approach for checking key aspects of the school's work.
- Children make better progress in the early years but, until recently, assessment has not been precise enough to identify children's potential.
- The trust's board of directors has not recognised the school's poor performance or responded with the right level of challenge and support.

The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher has gained the confidence of parents and staff. They support the changes she is making and recognise the improvements in behaviour.
- Staff at all levels understand and use the school's procedures to keep pupils safe.
- Pupils feel safe and behave well at playtimes.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(1) of 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.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve urgently the quality of leadership and management, including governance, by:
 - leaders monitoring teachers' assessment frequently and ensuring that it is accurate
 - widening the scope of evidence on the quality of teaching and the progress pupils are making by checking assessments against the work in pupils' work books
 - developing teachers' subject knowledge so that teaching for the new curriculum in writing and mathematics is effective and teachers accurately assess pupils' progress against expected standards
 - developing the leadership skills of middle leaders so that there is sufficient capacity in the leadership team for the school to make the rapid improvements it needs to make
 - sharpening the improvement plan with frequent milestones to check the impact of strategic decisions and actions against improvements in pupils' progress and attainment
 - ensuring that initiatives to improve the curriculum and raise standards are fully understood and have a rapid impact on outcomes for all groups of pupils
 - ensuring that leaders give governors accurate information about the quality of teaching and pupils' progress in a clear and consistent format so that impact can be more easily and rapidly assessed
 - governors developing a plan for monitoring the school's work against its strategic priorities to inform decision making, particularly about the use of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils
 - regularly reviewing all risk assessments, including those for the after-school childcare.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is good or better, by teachers:
 - having consistent and high expectations of pupils' achievement and presentation of their work, so that pupils have more pride in their work and their successes
 - consistently applying the behaviour policy in all lessons so that any inappropriate behaviour is eradicated
 - making decisions about what pupils know and can do by using evidence from pupils' work matched against the national curriculum expectations as well as the information from tests

- planning lessons that are based on assessment over time and on the evaluation of pupils' understanding
 - engaging pupils' interest and enthusiasm by checking to see whether pupils are ready to move on and intervening if they do not understand the work
 - ensuring that the targets pupils are given are based on their next steps in learning, are understood by the pupils and are checked and changed as necessary.
- Accelerating the progress that pupils make in English and mathematics, particularly the progress of those pupils who are disadvantaged, most able or who have special educational needs and/or disabilities by:
- rapidly closing gaps in pupils' arithmetical knowledge and developing pupils' ability to reason mathematically and apply their mathematical skills to solve problems
 - developing the accuracy of pupils' writing by overcoming weaknesses in spelling and punctuation and handwriting
 - ensuring that all teaching of writing, including the new writing and phonics programme, is pitched at moving pupils rapidly to the expected standard of writing for their age
 - providing consistent challenge for the most able pupils in mathematics and writing which will enable them to reach the high standards of which they are capable
 - ensuring that the needs of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are understood and planned for by teachers in all lessons so these pupils can apply and build on the skills they learn in supported programmes
 - checking frequently that the use of additional funding is enabling disadvantaged pupils to make accelerated progress and reach much higher standards
- Improve the quality of leadership in the early years by:
- leaders checking more frequently that the assessments made by all staff in the setting are accurate so that children's needs are more clearly understood and quickly planned for.

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.

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

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Leaders know that the progress made by pupils and the standards they reach are not good enough. However, they have not linked pupils' underachievement directly to weak leadership and teaching. Consequently, their assessment of the school's effectiveness has been too generous.
- The new headteacher has gained the confidence of parents and of staff. They value her approachability and recognise the improvements in behaviour and safeguarding. As yet, however, there is no consistently positive improvement in pupils' progress or the quality of teaching. The school's plans for improvement identify important priorities but the actions leaders are taking are not measured quickly enough to see whether they are having the intended impact.
- Middle leadership has not been developed and, currently, senior leaders' responsibilities are very broad. The headteacher and assistant headteacher hold between them all the roles that are central to the improvements the school needs to make. There is a lack of leadership capacity, with many teachers being new to the school and the profession. This has slowed the rate of progress.
- It is recommended that newly qualified teachers are not appointed.
- Senior leaders keep good records of how teachers follow school policies, particularly those for marking and letting pupils know how well they have done. However, leaders do not use the time in lessons or when looking at pupils' work books to gain information about pupils' progress. Outcomes from tests are not backed up by first-hand evidence in books of what pupils know and can do. Consequently, the assessment information held is insecure and this is limiting leaders' abilities to review plans and assess what has and has not worked.
- The use of the pupil premium has been revised this year after leaders recognised that previous spending had had little impact. There is now some closely targeted teaching based on individual pupils' particular risks of underachievement. Pupils in a few of the interventions are gaining skills and knowledge, which are closing their gaps in understanding. However, this sharper planning has come too late to alter the profile of underachievement for disadvantaged pupils.
- Leaders and teachers have not tackled the challenge of the new curriculum confidently. External support to the school has improved teachers' understanding of the curriculum for mathematics but this is still not being taught consistently across the school. Equally, the teachers' understanding of the curriculum for writing has not been fully and effectively developed.
- The breadth of the curriculum is planned for across the year and pupils are given interesting opportunities to gain first-hand experience during visits and special focus weeks. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 had an interesting visit to learn about the Egyptians. However, where leaders have revised the curriculum for mathematics and writing, the introduction has been hasty and staff lack confidence in teaching these new programmes.

- There is a good range of activities which pupils can take part in to develop their sporting and artistic interests. The primary physical education and sport premium is used effectively to support some of these and also to extend opportunities for pupils to take part in competitive sport and sports that are new to them.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils enthusiastically take up opportunities for leadership such as the 'learning champions'. They enjoy learning about the beliefs of others as well as respecting the values and beliefs of the school. Fundamental British values are aligned with the values of the school and are embedded in the school's Rights Respecting School Award.
- The school's commitment to equality is demonstrated in the admission of pupils who have found it difficult to cope in other schools and the external support leaders have accessed for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. However, groups of pupils such as those who are disadvantaged and the most able pupils do not have their needs met well and do not achieve as they should.
- The Plymouth CAST area adviser is new to the school. While the new adviser has made contact, the urgency of the school's situation has not been communicated fully to her. The trust has an understanding of how the school needs to improve but the board of directors has not taken the necessary action to intervene and directly support or monitor its improvement.

Governance of the school

- Governors are aware of the school's priorities, particularly those in relation to their responsibility for the progress of disadvantaged pupils. They recognise where there are weaknesses in pupils' standards and the quality of teaching. While governors are ambitious for the school to do well, they have not been able to reverse its weaknesses.
- Governors question the information they have from leaders and challenge leaders to demonstrate the impact of new initiatives. The information they are given, however, is in different formats and so it is difficult for them to make term-on-term checks on improvements to pupils' progress. Although governors question leaders about the achievement of disadvantaged pupils, there is little sign, as yet, of these pupils' progress improving.
- While governors visit the school frequently and report back to the governing body on their meetings, they do not plan these visits strategically around the priorities of the school. The information they gather on their visits does not always help them to gain a clear picture of what is working well.
- Governors have now tightened up procedures for performance management, including that of the headteacher. They fulfil their statutory responsibilities in relation to the financial management of the school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Staff value the quality of their training and are confident to report any concerns they have about pupils. They have been trained to recognise the risk of any pupil being inappropriately influenced or radicalised.

- The headteacher is the designated safeguarding lead and the training for this role is at the highest level. She uses a regular leadership newsletter to remind staff of their obligations to protect children from harm and to add updates to their training.
- The procedures for recruiting staff and recording the necessary checks meet statutory requirements.
- The site is securely fenced and the procedures for admitting visitors to the school are strong. All visitors are given appropriate guidance on safeguarding.
- Risk assessments are in place for school visits and activities. However, they are not always reviewed regularly. The risk assessment for the after-school childcare has not been reviewed for some years.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- Over time, not enough teaching has been good. It has not promoted pupils' progress consistently well so they reach the standards they should. Teaching has not responded to the needs of different groups of pupils. Disadvantaged pupils and the most able, in particular, have not achieved well enough. Teachers do not always have high enough expectations of pupils' presentation or their behaviour in class.
- Teachers do not plan sequences of lessons that build on what pupils already know and can do. This is because the assessment information they have about pupils' standards has not been consistently built up. The assessments rely too much on tests, and teachers are not systematically collecting information from the work that pupils produce in lessons.
- Much of the work that pupils do is lost within the lessons because it is rubbed off white-boards before teachers are able to check whether pupils have understood. Consequently, the evidence base of work in pupils' work books is limited and there is not enough work for teachers and leaders to assure themselves that assessments of pupils' capabilities and achievements are reliable.
- In lessons, teachers do not routinely check that pupils are able to do the work that is set or if the work has been finished quickly. The impact of this weak assessment, over time, is that the work set for the most able pupils is frequently too easy and they do not receive the teaching they need to exceed the expected standards and work in more depth. This is particularly true in mathematics and writing.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are taught well in their special programmes and are well supported by teaching assistants in class. However, sometimes when that support is not available, teachers do not sufficiently understand these pupils' needs and how to plan for them in whole-class lessons.
- From pupils' work books, it is clear that, during last year, teachers have not fully understood how to teach the new curriculum in mathematics. Following support from an advisory teacher, the full mathematics curriculum of arithmetic, problem solving and reasoning was put in place but this was too late for pupils to catch up and for many of them to reach the expected standard.

- Pupils' work books show that the teaching of writing has focused on pupils' compositional skills but has not focused sufficiently on the development of the more challenging skills of grammar and punctuation, which are expectations in the new curriculum.
- Subject leaders have implemented new schemes for teaching both mathematics and writing this year. Staff are not yet confident in delivering these programmes and consequently, there is, as yet, no impact.
- Phonics is taught in small groups across three year groups. These sessions vary in quality but, when teachers engage pupils with sharp and precise questioning and check pupils' understanding regularly, they help pupils successfully to acquire phonics skills to support their reading.
- Pupils generally respond well to advice given to them through marking. They do not, however, understand the targets that are in their work books. They say that they do not routinely use these.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement. Pupils do not always take a pride in their work and, in pupils' work books, some of the presentation is slapdash with erratic handwriting and crossings out. Sometimes work is left unfinished.
- The school uses the Rights Respecting model to develop pupils' understanding of the values needed to become good citizens. Pupils rise to the challenge of taking lead roles in the school council and in setting up playground games. Pupils are developing an understanding of people who have disabilities and in their act of worship they were able to sign the words of the song.
- Pupils say that the school is a friendly place and they feel safe. They are sure that there is no bullying and they value the chance to report any concerns they may have in the 'worry box'. They also value the support of the learning mentor who listens to them if they have a problem or they need a quiet space.
- Pupils are taught about staying safe, including when using the internet. They understand how to report a concern if they are worried by anything they see.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. While some pupils believe that behaviour is good, others say that they are sometimes distracted by pupils talking in lessons.
- In lessons, most pupils were keen to try hard but when work was too easy or too difficult, a few pupils played with the equipment or wandered about and did very little. When work was well pitched and appropriate, the same pupils were seen to settle and apply themselves well.

- When individual pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities display challenging behaviour, it is usually dealt with well, particularly by skilled teaching assistants. In whole-class situations, one or two struggle to cope. The school has records of the positive impact that its policies and approach have had on improving the behaviour of pupils with social and emotional difficulties through, for example, timely referral to behaviour support agencies and well-structured programmes of support.
- Parents recognise the recent improvement in pupils' behaviour. The new behaviour policy has had a positive effect on pupils' enjoyment of playtimes. They play together well and respond quickly to instructions from the mid-day supervisors. Older pupils organise games for the younger ones and football games proceed fairly under good supervision. When the behaviour policy is applied quickly and consistently in classes, pupils respond well.
- Most pupils attend well and attendance last year was broadly average. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils appears lower but the significant absence of one or two pupils has adversely affected this figure. The school's attendance officer is rigorous in following up lateness and persistent absence. There have been improvements in the attendance of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, which is now in line with that of other pupils in the school.
- Pupils are polite to staff and visitors and they move sensibly around the building. They show respect and good behaviour during the school's acts of worship. However, pupils who attend the after-school childcare do not, at times, show respect to staff in that setting.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Pupils currently in school are making inconsistent and often weak progress across Years 1 to 6, particularly in writing and mathematics. As a result, their work books and the school records show that across the school, but particularly in Years 5 and 6, very few are working at the expected standard for their age in these subjects. They are not being well prepared to move on to the next stage of their education.
- The progress made by disadvantaged pupils in the past has been particularly weak, sometimes in the lowest 10% nationally. Records held by the school show that the profile of weak progress continues for this group, and few are reaching the milestones that they should across the school. In recent assessments at the end of Year 6, none of this group of pupils met the expected combined standard in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make progress in their supported programmes and when they are well guided in class. Historically, however, their progress, particularly in reading and mathematics, has also been weak. Teaching assistants have a good understanding of the needs of the pupils they support but teachers do not, at times, understand the next steps these pupils need to make, and work books show that progress is not sustained in all lessons.

- The most able pupils do not make progress fast enough to exceed the expected standards in any subject. Few have reached the higher levels in any subject in the past at key stage 1 or key stage 2. This continued to be the case in the recent national assessments and pupils' work books show a lack of challenge for the most able pupils. This also applies to the most able disadvantaged pupils. They are not consistently taught at a level that would enable them to reach the higher standards in mathematics or write at greater depth. They have too few opportunities to apply their arithmetical skills to solving problems or to explain their mathematical reasoning.
- The most able pupils in school read fluently and enjoy their reading. However, they are not all able to interpret what they read at a level that is above that expected for their age.
- The percentage of pupils reaching the expected mark in the phonics check was below average this year. Pupils in key stage 1 use their phonics knowledge to read but for some of the lower ability pupils this is at a very rudimentary level. Standards in reading at the end of Year 2 were very low in the recent national assessments. Leaders have put in place a new programme for teaching phonics and reading to pupils in this age group but this has been too recent to have had any impact on current pupils' outcomes.
- Generally, pupils' grasp of spelling and punctuation is not developed securely and their handwriting lacks fluency. Pupils' work books show that they are not making the necessary rapid progress in these technicalities of writing to meet the expected standard for their age.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Staff changes mean that the leadership of the early years has changed this year and has passed to the headteacher. She is aware that, in the past, the first assessments made on children when they started school were not precise enough to ensure that children's potential or need was fully recognised or planned for.
- In past years, children, including disadvantaged children, have made expected progress and the proportion reaching a good level of development has been broadly in line with the national figure. A few children exceed the expected goals for this age, particularly in reading. However, in some cases, the few disadvantaged children who have the potential to do so, do not do as well as they could.
- The assessments made this year are accurate and based on close observation of what children know and can do. These assessments show that the majority of children enter school with the skills and knowledge usual for their age. Some, however, have strengths in language development or social development beyond that usually found. There are, equally, a number of children who have weaker skills, particularly in speaking and listening, and have already been identified as needing support to catch up.

- The teacher plans activities that take account of children's different starting points. For instance, children were seen developing the fine movements that will help them to write and use small tools. The most able children were threading beads and making their own repeating mathematical patterns while the least able were developing movements of squeezing and squashing clay.
- Children are beginning to understand and use numbers beyond 10 and to develop a sense of time across days and seasons. The curriculum is well balanced and activities maintain children's interest, such as the chance to make gingerbread men to deepen their understanding of a story.
- At this early point in the year, children already understand the routines and respond promptly to signals to stop and tidy up. They are learning to stay safe by listening to and following instructions. They play safely and sensibly together, taking turns in games and discussing when things are fair.
- Children in the Reception class attend school well and this, together with their good behaviour, will help them to make a good transition to Year 1.
- The leader of the early years is developing teaching well through focused observations and clear guidance to staff on improving practice.

School details

Unique reference number	140743
Local authority	Torbay
Inspection number	10019970

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	192
Appropriate authority	academy trust
Chair	Alan Denby
Headteacher	Catherine Lowry
Telephone number	01803 328480
Website	www.priory-primary.torbay.sch.uk
Email address	admin@priory-primary.torbay.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Priory Roman Catholic Primary School is slightly smaller than the average-sized primary school and is part of the Plymouth CAST. The Trust was formed in April 2014. The work of the Trust is overseen by a board of directors. The Trust is responsible for: one nursery; one first school; 32 primary schools and two secondary schools across seven local authorities in the south west region.
- The school joined the Trust and became an academy on 1 April 2014. The current headteacher took up her interim post fully in September 2015.
- The school does not comply with Department for Education guidance to provide details of the academy trust's scheme of delegation for governance functions.
- The school does not comply with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish about the school's scheme for teaching phonics, its approach to the curriculum or how parents can obtain further information on the curriculum. There is no information as to how the school performance tables published by the

Secretary of State on the Department for Education's website may be accessed.

- The school is organised into one class for each year group. Most children start in the Reception class.
- The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is similar to the national average. A higher proportion of pupils than average leave and join the school at times other than the usual times.

- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average and this is particularly the case for the proportion who have an education, health and care plan.
- The school operates a breakfast club and a setting that offers after-school paid childcare.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about its funding agreement and its list of directors on its website.
- The school does not comply with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish about the school's scheme for teaching phonics, its approach to the curriculum or how parents can obtain further information on the curriculum. There is no information as to how the school performance tables published by the Secretary of State on the Department for Education's website may be accessed.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors made visits to 29 lessons or learning activities. They looked at pupils' books in lessons and spoke to them about their work. Inspectors carried out some of these observations alongside senior leaders.
- Inspectors carried out a scrutiny of pupils' work books, including those from last year. They looked at records of pupils' progress that the school holds.
- Meetings were held with pupils, governors, and senior and middle leaders. A meeting was also held with a representative of the trust. Inspectors took account of the 21 responses to the staff questionnaire and met with a group of teachers.
- Inspectors spoke to parents in the playground and took account of the 91 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, and correspondence handed to the inspectors.
- Inspectors looked at documentation, including policies and documentation relating to safeguarding. They also saw documentation relating to the quality of teaching, reports on external monitoring of the school's performance and minutes of governors' meetings.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils in the playground, around school and in the after-school childcare.

Inspection team

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Ofsted Inspector

Phil Banks

Ofsted Inspector

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