

# Priory School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	110089
<b>Local Authority</b>	Slough
<b>Inspection number</b>	337439
<b>Inspection dates</b>	3–4 December 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Barbara Atcheson

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

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<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>	742
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Ms Zoe Varzi and Mr Ian Smith
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ms Jacqueline Laver
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	0 January 2007
<b>School address</b>	Orchard Avenue Slough Berkshire SL1 6HE
<b>Telephone number</b>	01628 600300
<b>Fax number</b>	01628 666917
<b>Email address</b>	info@prioryschool.com

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Royal Exchange Buildings  
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 27 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils and parents. They observed the school's work, and looked at the quality of monitoring, improvement planning and other key documents. Inspectors also considered the 230 questionnaires received from parents.

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

- the achievement of groups of pupils, particularly those in Key Stage 2, to determine whether teaching is sufficiently challenging
- the success of the school's measures to tackle any weaknesses.

## Information about the school

This is a large primary school which has a resource unit for 38 pupils with physical, medical and sensory difficulties and a resource unit for 12 pupils with very complex behavioural, social and emotional needs. One third of the school's pupils are from White British backgrounds and the remainder are from a mixture of other ethnic backgrounds. One third of the pupils speak English as an additional language.

The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average overall but the percentage who have statements of special educational needs in the resource units is higher than average. A significant number of pupils are admitted to school at times other than at the usual time of entry. The Nursery and Reception classes are joined to form the Early Years Foundation Stage. In May 2008 the school became a National School of Creativity. The school has training status for initial training of teachers and a number of awards, including Inclusion Quality Mark, Artsmark Gold, Basic Skills, Eco Schools and Healthy School.

**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?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**3**

### Main findings

The high quality of care, support and guidance which is at the heart of the school is reflected in pupils' consistently thoughtful and mature behaviour. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities benefit from effective specialist care and attention and opportunities to take an equal part in the school's rich programme of events. Their classmates gain a unique understanding into the difficulties these pupils face and this nurtures an ethos of mutual respect.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1 make good progress, as do the pupils in Key Stage 2 who have been at the school all the way through. However, an increasing number of pupils arrive in Key Stage 2 other than the usual times of entry. Many of these pupils have English as a second language while others have significant learning difficulties. These pupils make progress at a slower rate because of crucial gaps in their learning. Consequently, 2009 saw a dip in attainment, with pupils at the end of Year 6 reaching average levels rather than the significantly above-average levels of previous years. Although the school keeps a close track of individual pupils' progress, it has not been identifying where groups are underachieving and therefore it has not always been as effective as it could be in closing those learning gaps. The headteacher, senior managers and staff are united in their desire to do the best for all pupils and have already started to take steps to address the situation. The recent appointment of a member of staff with responsibility for pupils with English as an additional language means that the school is better placed to plan to meet the needs of these pupils more effectively.

Although the wide range of stimulating experiences related to the school's creative curriculum are not always successful in promoting basic skills, they underpin other areas of learning in a very real and vibrant way. These experiences also provide opportunities for outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. As a result, pupils really enjoy school. There are examples of good and outstanding teaching which are effective in securing good progress in learning, but this is not consistent across the school. The aim of some lessons is not always made clear and pupils are unsure of how to measure their success. In others, the pace of learning is slow and work is not closely matched to the learning needs of different groups of pupils.

Senior leaders share the headteacher's passion to raise achievement and have introduced a range of initiatives to bring about improvement. However, the impact on pupils' learning and progress has not always been monitored and evaluated rigorously and this has slowed the rate of development. Governors work hard and are committed to improvement but have a limited involvement in the school's work and do not always hold it to account. Although the school carries out a range of activities to help it engage

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with parents, a small minority feel that they do not know the governors well and that they do not always get enough information about how well their child is doing or how to help them improve. The school has an accurate view of its own strengths and weaknesses and has effectively addressed the key issues of the previous inspection. It has already implemented steps to address the needs of pupils with English as an additional language and shows a sound capacity to sustain further improvement.

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

- Improve achievement of all pupils, but particularly those in Key Stage 2, by 2010 through:
  - using data to pinpoint groups that are underachieving
  - quickly implementing specific interventions to accelerate their progress.
- Secure greater consistency in the quality of teaching by ensuring that:
  - all pupils are clear about the aim of the lesson and understand what they need to do to succeed
  - lessons move along at a smarter pace and there is an appropriate level of challenge for all pupils.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
  - ensuring that leaders at all levels rigorously monitor and evaluate the impact of initiatives for improvement on pupils' learning and progress
  - increasing the strategic role of the governing body and strengthening the degree to which it challenges the school
  - strengthening partnerships between the school, including the governing body, and parents.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****3**

Pupils enjoy lessons where the teaching is focused and purposeful and they can play an active role in their learning. In a science lesson, Year 5 pupils worked with great enthusiasm as they made their own decisions about how to classify different sources of light. A well-structured follow-up activity built on pupils' ideas, allowing them to have their own 'Eureka!' moments as they discovered how light travels from a source. In lessons where teachers talk for too long, the pace of learning slows and pupils, particularly girls, are passive participants in their learning. Where work is not tailored to pupils' specific needs, some find their tasks too easy while others have difficulty in understanding what they have to do.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive good support and make progress at a similar rate to their peers. Specialist support enables some to make outstanding progress. For example, two pupils from the conductive education unit walked on to the stage in the Christmas production, while a pupil who had a history of refusing to speak did a recitation. The school recognises that pupils in the early stages

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of learning English have not always received enough support to enable them to acquire a good understanding of the language, and has effective plans to rectify the situation. Pupils work and play harmoniously. One commented that 'you may not be the same religion but you can respect what others believe, it gives you a better understanding of people'. Pupils are very knowledgeable about how to stay safe. They have an exceptionally good understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle, enjoying 'lots of vegetables' at lunchtime and fruit for their break. Exemplary behaviour is a major factor in the positive ethos of the school. Pupils are proud to be members of the school council and of their work to raise funding for playground equipment. The school's ambassadors are keen to promote the strengths of the school. Participation in workshops and working with a variety of experts in the arts to produce high quality exhibitions and performances extend pupils' experience of the wider world effectively.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective is the provision?

Good relationships, enthusiastic teachers and a creative curriculum that provides exciting opportunities to work in depth ensure that pupils enjoy their learning. Visitors

<sup>1</sup> 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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from the Art Mosaic Design Company helped pupils from Year 4 to use glass and marble to create glittering Roman mosaics. Visits to a swan sanctuary gave pupils in Year 1 a real insight into the life of a swan when studying Saint-Saëns' Carnival of the Animals. Pupils in the resource unit made effective use of a sound beam to make lively music to accompany their paintings. However, although the curriculum is appropriately focused on improving pupils' key skills in literacy and numeracy, it did not avert the recent dip in attainment at the end of Year 6.

Where the pace of lessons is brisk and the teacher has good subject knowledge and expects high standards, progress is good. For example, pupils in a Year 1 class were enthusiastic in their approach to learning their letter sounds because it involved a lot of active learning. They made good progress because the teacher ensured each small step was secure before moving on. However, there are lessons where teachers talk for too long and there is insufficient challenge for pupils. Teaching assistants are well deployed and support learning well.

Vulnerable pupils receive valuable support which enables them to make good progress in developing social and life skills. The school's exceptional work with these pupils, their families and a range of agencies ensures that they make the best of the opportunities provided by the school. Strong relationships and very effective care and guidance enable all pupils to benefit from the wide range of experiences that the school offers. Pupils in the resource units benefit from highly trained, knowledgeable staff who help them to develop secure social and emotional skills so that they integrate well into the school.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The headteacher motivates staff and senior leaders to focus on priorities and to continually seek ways to offer a range of exciting learning opportunities to pupils. Consequently, the school has enjoyed a considerable amount of recognition for the quality of its work in the wider curriculum and has, until the dip in 2009, had a good record of enabling pupils to reach levels that were significantly higher than average. The school keeps a detailed track of pupils' learning but does not always use this information effectively to identify the varying rates of progress across the school or to monitor the impact of the strategies introduced to raise standards. The school's success in the promotion of equality of opportunity is clearly demonstrated in the seamless integration of pupils from the resource units and the concerted effort put in to strengthening

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support for pupils learning English as an additional language.

The governing body discharges its statutory responsibilities appropriately and knows the strengths and weaknesses in provision. Procedures for safeguarding are good, and effective in ensuring that all pupils feel safe and that their emotional and social needs are met. Checks on the suitability of adults to work with children are thorough and child protection arrangements are secure and updated regularly. Given the outcomes for pupils, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

Senior leaders promote good levels of community cohesion, particularly in relation to pupils' involvement in the school and the local community. Strong links with local secondary schools also give pupils a view of secondary school life. One pupil commented, 'As we entered the school, we could not believe our eyes, we were so excited to be able to use the resources at the grammar school.' Links with Llangollen give pupils an insight into a very different part of Great Britain. Well-considered plans are in hand to implement a strategy for broadening pupils' appreciation of life overseas.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## **Early Years Foundation Stage**

Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. It is led and managed well and staff work as an effective team. A high level of attention is paid to ensuring that children are safe. As a result of the good provision in the Nursery, children enter the Reception classes with levels of skills and knowledge that are typical for children of their age. They continue to make good progress and start Year 1 with levels that are above those expected because:



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- accurate assessment ensures that teachers have a good understanding of the learning and development needs of the children
- activities are planned which build upon what children already know, understand and can do
- teaching assistants are well informed about the needs of children with special needs and/or disabilities, so they are able to provide focused support
- staff form warm and trusting relationships with children and their parents.

However, there are occasions when teachers talk for too long in introductory sessions and so limit the time children spend on independent tasks. The outside area is not used as an extension of the classroom at all times and outside activities are not always purposeful.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
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**

Most parents are very positive in their support for the work of the school. The inspection team agrees with the high value parents place on the care the school provides to ensure children are safe and enjoy school. However, a small minority felt that their children could be making better progress in Key Stage 2. The inspection confirmed that there have been issues about progress and the school recognises that there is still more work to do in relation to adapting aspects of its provision. Several parents made positive comments about the way that the school has supported their children to help them overcome their individual difficulties.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Priory 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 230 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 742 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	144	61	86	36	5	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	12	51	113	48	2	1	1	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	72	30	135	57	19	8	3	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	89	38	129	54	7	3	4	2
The teaching is good at this school	102	43	120	51	5	2	1	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	73	31	125	53	28	12	2	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	90	38	130	55	8	3	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)	76	32	121	51	40	4	3	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	91	38	126	53	11	5	2	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	86	36	123	52	16	7	2	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	64	27	139	59	14	6	3	1
The school is led and managed effectively	90	38	1430	55	12	5	1	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	110	46	116	49	5	2	1	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

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

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

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

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



5 December 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Priory School, Slough SL1 6HE

Thank you for being so friendly when we visited your school. We enjoyed seeing your work in lessons and talking to you. You really helped us. We think your school gives you a satisfactory standard of education and there are quite a lot of very good things about it. These are the main things that helped us come to this conclusion.

- Children in the Nursery and Reception class get off to a good start.
- You thoroughly enjoy school and behave exceptionally well.
- Teaching is satisfactory. Some of your lessons really help you to do your best but there are some which do not help you so much.
- The school provides some exciting opportunities and a wide range of extra activities.
- You have an excellent understanding of healthy lifestyles and how to keep safe.
- The teachers look after you exceptionally well.
- Your headteacher and her staff are working hard to make learning better for you.

We have asked the school to do three things.

- Help you to do better in Years 3 to 6 by:
  - finding out who is not getting on as fast as they could
  - making sure that they get the right help quickly.
- Ensure that all lessons meet your needs by:
  - telling you what you are going to learn and how to judge when you have succeeded
  - making sure that you are kept busy, always have to think hard and give of your best in every lesson.
- Ensure that senior leaders make the school even better by:
  - checking to see how well the improvements they make are helping you to do better
  - making sure the governors ask questions and help the school to make things even better for you
  - making strong links with your parents and helping them to get to know the governors.

We hope that you will all continue to enjoy coming to school and to try your hardest so that you are successful in the future.

Yours sincerely

Barbara Atcheson

Lead inspector

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