

Priory Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122815
Local Authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	340219
Inspection dates	8-9 December 2009
Reporting inspector	Stephen Walker

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	171
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Kath Holmes
Headteacher	Mr Anthony Harrison
Date of previous school inspection	2-3 May 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 15 lessons and held meetings with the headteacher, the chair of governors, staff and groups of pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of evidence, including the school development plan, the tracking system to monitor the pupils' progress, the work pupils were doing in their books and the questionnaires completed by 42 parents and carers, staff and a sample of pupils.

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

- the rate of progress of all groups of pupils in the school
- how effectively teaching is engaging the pupils in ensuring that they make progress
- the quality of the curriculum and the systems of care, guidance and support for the pupils
- the effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage in supporting the development of the younger children
- the effectiveness of the leadership and management in supporting improvements in the school.

Information about the school

The school is smaller than most primary schools. It serves a former coalmining town, although some pupils come from outside the area. The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds, but a few are from minority ethnic groups. A few have recently arrived from Poland and use English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with a range of special educational needs and/or disabilities is in line with the national average. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average.

Provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage is organised through the Reception class. The school has been awarded Investors in People status.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school. It has outstanding features. The headteacher provides clear and collaborative leadership, which has improved the school since the last inspection. There is a distinct emphasis on the growth of the whole person which includes both the academic and personal development of the pupils. The caring and inclusive ethos of the school provides a high-quality environment for learning. One parent wrote: 'The school strives to bring the best out of the learners and my child is very happy there.'

Achievement is good. Pupils make good progress and the vast majority attain standards that are above average by the time they leave the school. The emphasis on the key skills of reading, writing and mathematics is supporting the good progress of the pupils. The school is successful in supporting pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the few who are learning English as an additional language.

The exceptionally high standard of care, guidance and support is greatly supporting the good personal development of the students. The vast majority of pupils are well behaved and are very proud to be part of the school. They thoroughly enjoy their time there and develop into positive and friendly individuals. A key strength of the school is the exemplary standard of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They show kindness and consideration to others so that there is a real family atmosphere in the school. They are reflective and show a respect for other people's feelings and values. Pupils make an excellent contribution to the community by raising considerable amounts of money for charity and arranging events in the local area.

Teaching is good. Pupils are actively involved in lessons and make good progress, but they are not yet sufficiently independent in taking responsibility for their own learning or personal development. The curriculum provision is well organised and imaginative so that it provides good learning opportunities to meet the different needs of the pupils.

The school runs very smoothly and calmly because leadership and management are effective. Self-evaluation is accurate. The headteacher and governors are well aware of the strengths and areas for development. There are very positive relationships with most parents and carers. Parents and carers are given regular information about school events and the progress of their children. Reports for pupils with special

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educational needs and/or disabilities are not always clear or frequent enough for individual parents. All issues from the previous inspection have been successfully addressed including the previously inadequate provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The effective leadership of the school, the good record of pupils' progress and the commitment to continuous improvement by all staff indicate that this school has a good capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Provide more opportunities to encourage the greater independence of pupils in their learning and personal development by:
 - encouraging them to think for themselves and demonstrate initiative
 - supporting them to take a greater part in the organisation of the school
 - providing more opportunities for them to take responsibility for their own learning.

- Improve the wording and timing of the individual educational plans for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities so that their parents and carers are better informed to support the learning and progress of their children by:
 - using language that is clearly understood by parents, carers and pupils
 - reviewing more regularly the plans to reassure parents and carers that their children are making at least satisfactory progress.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils' current work shows that the majority of classes are making good progress. Pupils are attentive and display an eagerness to do well. Most enjoy learning and make good progress from their close to average starting points. By the time pupils leave the school, attainment is above average in English, mathematics and science. The school is effectively addressing the previous slower progress in Years 1 and 2, where there have been staff absences and changes. Pupils with special education needs and/or disabilities and those entitled to free school meals make good progress in line with others. Pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds including those who use English as an additional language also make good progress.

Pupils of all ages feel very safe and secure in the school. Attendance is above the national average and reflects pupils' enjoyment of school. The school is fully inclusive and pupils warmly welcome newcomers from different parts of the world. Most pupils have a very clear understanding of how to eat healthily, and take part in sporting activities. The school council is active in supporting improvements in the school such as purchasing additional equipment for the playground. Pupils actively seize the

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opportunity to take responsibility, such as that of looking after younger ones. Pupils' basic skills and ability to work with others are developing well. As a result, they are well prepared for their secondary education.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Most teaching is good because most teachers plan lessons which are appropriate to the abilities of the pupils. The supportive and good-humoured relationships between teachers and pupils ensure that there is a positive learning environment in the classroom. The atmosphere in lessons encourages pupils to attempt difficult work and ask for help if they do not understand. In the best lessons, teachers plan a range of interesting activities and have high expectations of pupils. As a result, learners display enthusiasm and sustain high levels of concentration. Outstanding learning takes place when teachers extend the pupils and provide opportunities for independent thinking. However, not all teachers are encouraging the pupils to think for themselves and take more responsibility for their own learning. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported by teaching assistants both in whole-class and smaller teaching groups. However, the provision and outcomes for these pupils is not reported clearly or frequently enough to parents and carers to support them with their children's learning. Pupils are well informed about their targets and how to improve their work. Classrooms are attractive learning areas although teachers do not always display pupils' work as examples of good practice.

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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The school places a high emphasis on the development of literacy and numeracy, which supports pupils' good progress. The topic approach in each year shows the pupils the links between the different subjects. All pupils work in the new information and communication technology suite at least once a week to develop their computer skills. A detailed programme in religious education and personal health and social education greatly supports pupils' personal development. The use of the local area and school grounds brings learning to life. There are visits to Beauvale Priory and the DH Lawrence Museum in Eastwood. These and the good range of clubs and extra-curricular activities greatly enhance the pupils' enjoyment and experience of school.

The pastoral support for the pupils is outstanding because there are extremely effective systems of individual support for all pupils, including those who are challenging or vulnerable. The school is very welcoming. Pupils confirm that there are always members of staff to talk to if they have a problem. There are very clear procedures for monitoring pupils' attendance and following up absences. Excellent working relationships between the school and external agencies benefit pupils, ensuring their social and learning needs are met through effective programmes. Pupils who use English as an additional language are well supported and quickly integrated into the lessons. Excellent arrangements are in place to support a smooth transition to secondary school.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has a focused approach and commitment to promote good standards of behaviour, enjoyment in learning, high levels of care and attainment for all pupils. The school mission and priorities have been shared with staff so that there is a clear agenda for raising standards in all areas of the school. Rigorous systems to monitor teaching and track pupils' performance ensure that attainment is above average and all learners make good progress.

The school development plan is a comprehensive working document with clear actions and targets, which are particularly focused on improving both the attainment and personal development of the pupils. Governors are well informed of the school's progress and areas for development. They are fully involved in monitoring progress for themselves, and in holding the school to account. They recognise that links with a

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minority of parents and carers could be stronger. The subject leaders are developing their roles so that they are more effective in their planning, supporting and monitoring responsibilities although this is at an early stage of development. Robust procedures for safeguarding meet statutory requirements and underpin the school's very caring approach. The school has a strong commitment to inclusion and equal opportunities for all.

There are good partnerships with community groups, external services and local schools. The school is an active member of both the St John Houghton Catholic Family and the Eastwood Family of Schools. It makes a good contribution to community cohesion and works very closely with the parish to welcome and support all families in the community whatever their religion, ethnicity or socio-economic background. The school recognises that more could be done to evaluate the impact of this work in the local community.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make a good start to their education because provision is well planned. When they enter Reception, their skills are a little below those usual for their age. They make good progress and most enter Year 1 with skills and knowledge in line with the expected levels. Good teaching effectively addresses their weaker areas of creative development, and communication, language and literacy. Staff in the Reception class provide a secure and exciting environment where children learn quickly and happily. There is a good balance of child-initiated and adult-directed activities. The calm and purposeful atmosphere is created by good organisation and leadership. The children develop satisfactory social skills, behave well and help each

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other. Structured activities support their personal development as well as encouraging number and language skills. The children show curiosity and signs of developing some independence. The teacher keeps detailed records of the children's skills and uses this information to match the activities well to the full range of their needs. The recently extended outdoor-play space provides opportunities to extend learning but there is insufficient equipment and toys within this area. There is regular liaison with parents who speak highly of the care and support for their children.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The majority of parents and carers who returned the questionnaire are positive about the work of the school and its impact on their children's learning. Parents and carers emphasise the caring approach of staff towards their children. A number make detailed comments emphasising the good leadership of the headteacher. A small minority of respondents think the school does not deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour. The inspectors found very little evidence to support this view. A small minority mention that they do not feel that the school takes account of their suggestions and concerns or keeps them informed about their children's progress. The inspectors found that these parents had children with special educational needs. Although their children actually make good progress in school, individual education plans are unclear and contain too much educational jargon. The inspection revealed little to endorse the few other criticisms made in the questionnaire returns. Overall, parents' and carers' views reflect the inspection findings.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Priory Catholic Primary 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 42 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 171 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	19	45	20	48	3	7	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	21	50	19	45	2	5	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	14	33	22	52	6	14	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	14	33	22	52	5	12	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	17	40	20	48	5	12	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	15	36	22	52	5	12	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	22	52	19	45	1	2	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)	16	38	19	45	7	17	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	18	43	19	45	4	10	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	14	33	19	45	5	12	4	10
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	11	26	22	52	6	14	3	7
The school is led and managed effectively	17	40	16	38	7	17	2	5
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	18	43	20	48	4	10	0	0

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

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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

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>the following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.



10th December 2009

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Priory Catholic Primary School, Eastwood, NG16 3GT

Thank you for making us so welcome in your school and for talking to us during the inspection. We really enjoyed watching your lessons and looking at your work. It was also good to see you in the nativity play, assembly and during playtime. Your school is a good one and has some excellent features. There are many positive things about your school.

- You enjoy school and make good progress in your lessons.
- You are friendly, polite and well behaved.
- You show kindness and consideration to others.
- You raise a great deal of money for charities.
- The teachers and support staff care greatly for you.
- Your teachers work hard to make your lessons interesting.
- You have a very good headteacher.

We have asked Mr Harrison, the staff and the governors to do the following things to make the school even better.

- Help all of you to become more independent in your learning and personal development.
- Improve the wording and timing of the action plans for pupils who find learning difficult, so that their parents and carers are better informed about their progress.

We would like to wish you success in your future education.

With very best wishes

Yours sincerely

Stephen Walker
Lead inspector

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