

# Inspection of a good school: Priory Junior School

Longsands Road, St Neots, Cambridgeshire PE19 1TF

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Inspection dates:

9 and 10 November 2022

## Outcome

Priory Junior School continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils speak with fondness about their school experiences. On the playground and when in lessons, pupils treat each other with kindness. They are considerate towards each other's needs. For example, on the playground, pupils ensure that nobody is left to feel lonely or without someone to play with. Pupils show understanding for those who find it hard to manage their emotions. Pupils are supported to understand and manage negative feelings positively.

Pupils are safe. They feel that adults look after them well. Pupils know how to stay safe and what to do if they have concerns. They feel confident that, if they were worried about something, members of staff would willingly listen and help find solutions. On the rare occasions when bullying happens, staff deal with it well and it stops.

Pupils work hard to live up to leaders' high expectations. Pupils understand the value of learning and are proud of their achievements, including in the headteacher's award and the 'Aspirational Me' award. They enjoy and benefit from the many opportunities leaders provide for them to develop their talents and interests. Pupils are particularly proud of the high levels of success the school reaches in sport.

## What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The curriculum is ordered sensibly to help pupils build what they know in appropriate steps. In most subjects, leaders have provided enough guidance for teachers to plan and deliver effective learning activities. Staff teach effectively, so that pupils remember most of what leaders expect. In some subjects, however, leaders have not outlined exactly what pupils must know and remember over the long term. For these subjects, some pupils forget or get confused about what they have been taught because it is not based on pupils' prior learning.

Teachers are effective in checking what pupils have learned. When teachers find pupils have misunderstood, support is provided to avoid them falling behind.

Pupils enjoy reading and learn to read well. They value and use the school's well-stocked indoor library. Some pupils take advantage of the outdoor library to read outside during playtimes. Teachers help pupils develop their vocabulary, and this helps pupils to read sophisticated texts. Leaders ensure that those who are still learning the basic skills of reading are well supported. This helps these pupils to catch up quickly if they start to struggle to keep up. Staff are well trained and consistently follow the school's approach to teaching phonics. Books are well matched to pupils' needs, and staff give pupils regular opportunities to practise. As a result, pupils become fluent and confident readers.

Staff support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) effectively. Leaders quickly and accurately identify pupils' needs and provide helpful training and guidance for staff. Staff usually follow leaders' guidance and deliver effective learning activities and assistance. Occasionally, staff do not follow all of leaders' guidance or do not provide exactly what these pupils need. When this happens, some pupils with SEND do not learn as well as they could.

Leaders and staff have created a calm learning environment throughout the school. In lessons, pupils concentrate and listen attentively when required. During class discussions, pupils speak with maturity and sensitivity.

Pupils benefit from the many opportunities for them to develop personally. Staff teach pupils about maintaining positive physical and mental health. They also ensure that pupils learn the importance of valuing the different beliefs and lifestyles in modern Britain.

Since the restrictions placed on schools due to the pandemic were eased, leaders have started to give parents and carers greater access to the school to find out more about pupils' experiences. This is greatly appreciated by parents. Some parents said that leaders need to improve further the communication between home and school. School leaders are aware of this and are starting to act.

Staff are proud of and enjoy working at the school. They say that the school is well led and managed. Staff feel well supported. They appreciate how leaders are considering changes with a view to helping staff maintain a reasonable workload.

Governors carry out their statutory responsibilities well. They know what is happening in the school and successfully hold leaders to account with effective questioning and appropriate challenge.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that staff are vigilant about the signs of potential harm. Staff are well trained in safeguarding. They act swiftly and appropriately when concerns arise.

Detailed records about safeguarding issues are well maintained. Leaders use this information to work well with external agencies, so that vulnerable pupils receive the help they need.

Leaders make sure that background checks are carried out to determine the suitability of adults working at the school.

The curriculum content informs pupils well so they know how to keep themselves safe. They recognise risks and are taught how to mitigate these when necessary, for example when working on online.

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

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Staff do not always follow guidance or provide exactly what pupils with SEND need. When this happens, pupils with SEND do not learn as well as they could. Leaders must ensure that staff have access to any training needed and follow guidance. This is so that they adapt their teaching effectively to support effective learning for all pupils with SEND.
- In some areas of the curriculum, leaders have not clarified exactly what pupils must learn and what teachers should revisit over time. As a result, teachers do not teach all key knowledge effectively, based on what pupils do or do not know, and pupils sometimes forget what was previously taught. Leaders must outline and order the specific knowledge they expect pupils to learn in all curriculum subjects, so that pupils achieve well in all curriculum areas.

## **Background**

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in October 2012.

## **How can I feed back my views?**

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

## Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	110702
<b>Local authority</b>	Cambridgeshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10241695
<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	329
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Stephen Hardy
<b>Headteacher</b>	Tracy Keefe
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.priory.cambs.sch.uk">www.priory.cambs.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	20 June 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Since 2020, the number of pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has increased. The proportion of pupils with an ECH plan at the school is now well above the national average.
- Leaders do not use any alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector held discussions with governors, the headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator, teachers, members of support staff, parents and pupils.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in mathematics, reading and science. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector also spoke with pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work in some other subjects.

- The inspector spoke with leaders and staff about safeguarding policies and practices at the school. The inspector looked at records about safeguarding, the school roll, the behaviour of pupils, the provision of pupils' personal development and leaders' approach to managing the workload of staff.
- The lead inspector reviewed and considered 58 responses to Ofsted Parent View, including 55 free-text comments. The 36 responses to the Ofsted staff survey were also taken into account, along with 131 responses to the Ofsted pupil survey.

### **Inspection team**

Al Mistrano, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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