

Worksop Priory CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122823
Local Authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	314416
Inspection dates	8–9 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Rajinder Harrison

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	263
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	82
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Father Nicholas Spicer
Headteacher	Mr R Woodhead
Date of previous school inspection	21 June 2004
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Holles Street Worksop Nottinghamshire S80 2LJ

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	8–9 October 2008
Inspection number	314416

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average sized primary school. While the majority of pupils are of White British origin, a small proportion represents a diverse range of minority ethnic backgrounds. The school has very few pupils who are at an early stage of learning English as a new language. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. These pupils' needs cover a wide range but are mainly emotional, behavioural and social and moderate learning difficulties. A below average proportion has a statement of special educational need.

Sixty four children attend part time in the Nursery. They start school with knowledge and skills that are exceptionally low in relation to what might typically be expected for their age.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school. Its success stems from the exceptional commitment of all staff, led by an extremely determined and inspirational headteacher who wants to provide pupils with the best education possible. Outstanding leadership, teaching, curriculum and care, guidance and support result in pupils having extremely positive attitudes to school and making outstanding progress in learning. Pupils' generally good attendance reflects their eagerness to be there. Pupils feel secure, happy and valued at school; they form excellent relationships, grow in self-confidence and are inspired to do their best. Their high achievement shows that they love learning. School leaders have been successful in establishing what parents typically describe as, 'a very caring and supportive environment where all staff are brilliant and where their children thrive'.

Achievement across the school is outstanding. Through many exciting activities and experiences, children in the nursery grow in confidence and independence. They make an excellent start to their learning and, at the end of the Foundation Stage, most attain average standards in all but literacy and numeracy. This excellent achievement is maintained through Years 1 to 6. Overall standards are average at the end of Year 2 and above average at the end of Year 6. Improvements in developing pupils' word building skills and a high emphasis on speaking and listening and investigation activities have had a significant impact on raising standards generally. Developing pupils' thinking skills is now a high priority and the impact is already evident in rising standards in mathematics and science in Year 6. While standards in reading are above average, writing remains average because pupils have too few opportunities to practise their writing skills in other subjects. Excellent support for pupils who need additional help with their learning ensures they achieve as well as their classmates. The curriculum, with its many enrichment activities, is creatively planned to help all pupils reach their potential both in their learning and their outstanding personal development. Teachers provide pupils with the right targets and advice that they need to improve their work successfully. Pupils are prepared extremely effectively for the future.

Despite many staffing disruptions, improvement since the last inspection has been good. The headteacher involves all staff and governors in identifying the right improvement priorities and everyone is involved in evaluating the school's performance. Through excellent subject leadership, improvements in the curriculum have resulted in higher standards and the very close analysis of each pupil's progress allows the school to deploy staff to best effect to ensure every pupil can succeed. Expectations of staff and pupils are very high and the school successfully meets its very challenging targets. While attendance is generally good, the school is taking further steps to dissuade a small number of families from taking holidays in term time so their children can achieve more. Given that leaders have been successful in raising standards and that the school now provides excellent care and education, their capacity to improve the school further is outstanding.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children make an excellent start in the Foundation Stage because staff have high expectations of what the children can do and they provide sensitive individual support for those who need extra guidance. Children's personal and social development is a high priority as many lack confidence when they first start. They thrive in the supportive atmosphere where routines are

well established. Care and welfare arrangements are excellent. Parents appreciate that their children settle in so quickly and that they enjoy school, a typical comment being, 'My child says that school is fun. She always comes home happy'.

Children select from a good balance of adult-led activities and those that they choose for themselves. They gain confidence and independence as they explore and experience new situations. Imaginative activities and attractive and inviting classrooms and outside areas encourage children to explore and discover as they play. For example, as staff fired up their imaginations, children delighted in creeping stealthily for fear of being discovered as they went on their 'bear hunt'. Staff rightly give a high emphasis on developing children's speaking and listening skills and to extending their vocabulary. Staff guide children very effectively and intervene with helpful questioning. They check that every child tries everything and steer them gently towards activities they find more challenging, for example, writing and mathematics. Under the Foundation Stage leader's excellent management, further improvements are in place to provide children with even more opportunities to improve these basic skills.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing by extending the opportunities pupils have to practise their writing skills in all subjects.
- Improve pupils' attendance by applying the new procedures rigorously to limit the holidays that their families take in term time.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Excellent provision in the Foundation Stage results in children attaining the levels expected in all but literacy and numeracy, where attainment is below average. At the end of Year 2, teacher assessments in 2008 indicate that standards are broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. As this group of pupils had started Key Stage 1 with lower than average language and mathematical skills these standards demonstrate pupils making excellent progress through Years 1 and 2. Pupils in Key Stage 2 also make excellent progress. The school's data and provisional results from the 2008 national tests show standards at the end of Year 6 to be above average in mathematics and science and average in English. The action taken to improve reading skills has helped to raise standards in reading to above average. The programme to develop pupils' thinking skills has had a marked impact on raising standards in mathematics and science, but a lesser impact on writing because pupils do not have enough opportunities to write in other subjects. Pupils who need extra help with their learning receive the support they need to make excellent gains in learning. Every effort is made to help the few pupils who have low attendance to catch up with their work and their progress is generally at least good.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils have an excellent awareness of the need to keep safe, eat healthily and exercise. Most select healthy lunch options and enjoy the healthy snacks the school provides. Sports clubs where pupils develop fitness regimes are very popular. Visits and visitors introduce pupils to the wider world and diverse cultures. Although pupils' understanding of the multicultural nature of British society is less well developed, pupils are very aware that differences should be valued and respected. They speak, for example, with kindness and concern

about the importance of caring for others. They are highly motivated to take on responsibilities. The school council regularly organises charity events and playground activities. Pupils' contribution to the community is outstanding, particularly through the church, arts festivals and other events. They have an excellent understanding of global issues such as recycling and develop enterprise skills through various business initiatives. Through excellent links with communities, both at home and abroad, they understand very well the importance of working with others supportively. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They are confident that on the rare occasions that disagreements arise, friends or 'mediators' sort it out quickly. Pupils love school 'because we get to do fun things like working on the radio station'. Their high achievement and excellent personal skills prepare them exceptionally well for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

When asked how learning could be made more exciting, one Year 6 pupil simply replied, 'It couldn't be!' Because of the exceptional teamwork between adults and pupils, learning is highly successful. Teachers and support staff guide pupils in tackling problems cooperatively. Consequently, pupils develop an open mind to learning and work together extremely effectively. Activities are very varied and demanding and are often completed against tight timescales so that everyone works at a brisk pace. Excellent presentations capture pupils' interest and imaginations. Searching questions make pupils think and encourages high levels of self-motivation. Pupils settle to work promptly, eager to explore and investigate. They are particularly enthusiastic when they discuss and share their ideas. Imaginative themes that link work across subjects help pupils see the relevance of their learning. For example, they apply their debating skills in their investigations and so appreciate why success in one is dependent on the other. Teachers are very aware of pupils' varying capabilities and provide work that gives the right level of challenge or support. Pupils have a justified confidence that their lessons always offer fun and excitement.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is designed to make sure learning is exciting and fun. An outstanding element is the introduction and fostering of 'Thinking Skills'. This provision, where pupils have to think about and explain their reasoning, has already had significant impact on increasing pupils' confidence and raising standards particularly in science and mathematics. Improvements in developing pupils' word building skills, have been so effective in raising standards in reading that a local teacher training establishment uses the school as a model of excellent practice. Improving writing to the same level, by giving pupils more opportunities to write is now a key priority. The curriculum is resourced very effectively, with excellent use of information and communication technology to support teaching and learning. Provision for the pupils who are more able and those who find learning difficult, is not only excellent but also exciting. Hence many pupils arrive early to school or stay late to complete their work. A wide range of well-attended clubs, activities, trips, visitors and visits enrich learning and pupils' personal development extremely effectively. Pupils simply enjoy everything the school provides because, 'everyday we do exciting things'.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care arrangements, including child protection, safeguarding and health and safety procedures, are all robust. Staff take prompt action if pupils raise any concerns. Pupil's individual needs are considered sensitively and external agencies consulted where appropriate. Pupils are prepared well for secondary schools and say, 'We are ready for it'. Parents appreciate how much the school does to support pupils and parents. The school has worked exceptionally hard to raise attendance and is introducing further measures to reduce holidays in term time.

Priory is a 'Pathfinder' school within the local authority for the assessment of pupils' progress. Excellent systems identify very effectively where pupils need specific support. Teachers use the information to plan precisely what pupils are expected to learn and how they will know if they have done so. Pupils have individual targets that teachers discuss with parents. Teachers refer to these targets regularly so pupils can check and improve their work. This helps pupils tackle their work with a very clear picture of what they are working towards. High quality marking gives pupils detailed guidance as to what they should do next and how well they are doing.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Staff and governors share the headteacher's outstanding drive and determination that children in this school are safe, happy and successful. In its calm, friendly and welcoming atmosphere, everyone is treated with kindness and respect. The school's ethos encourages a very strong belief that pupils can, and will, achieve to high levels. Supported by very effective senior leaders, the headteacher has established a culture of high expectations and understanding about the school's strengths and weaknesses. Improvement planning is a team effort. Teaching and learning are monitored rigorously. Staff who need support or training have excellent opportunities to develop their skills. Subject leaders share responsibility for much of this work and do so very effectively, hence, for example, the recent improvement in teaching reading. Following careful scrutiny of pupils' lower performance in writing, additional support has been targeted to address this effectively. Governors provide excellent support and are involved in monitoring all aspects of the school's work very closely. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. Several commented favourably on how much their children love school and on their good progress. Excellent links with other schools and the local community, for example the 'Toys 'n' Tots' session and the wider world, support pupils' outstanding personal and academic achievement.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	1

¹Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

10 October 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Worksop Priory C of E Primary School, Worksop, S80 2LJ

You may remember that three inspectors recently came to visit your school. Thank you for making us so welcome and for talking to us about all the interesting things that you like about your school. We know that you and your parents are very proud of your school and you have every right to be, because it is outstanding. Your headteacher and all the other staff do an excellent job in making sure you make a good start to your education.

We were impressed with your excellent behaviour, how well you get on with each other and how enthusiastic you are in lessons. It was brilliant to see so many hands go up to answer questions and how well you settle quickly to your work. You told us how much you enjoy all the interesting activities at the school and we saw that many of you take part in lots of clubs. We particularly loved listening to the older pupils debate the pros and cons of space exploration and joining in with the 'bear hunt' in the Foundation class. That was really good fun. All of you who have specific jobs as school councillors and 'mediators' carry out your duties very sensibly. Staff take excellent care of you and they give you plenty of help so that you know what you need to do to do even better. We were really impressed to see how many of you knew and made such good use of your individual learning targets.

You all make excellent progress. The youngest children get off to an excellent start in the Foundation unit and those of you in Year 6 are working at standards that are above average.

Some of you could do even better in your writing so we have asked your teachers to make sure you do more writing in all subjects. Most of you come to school everyday because you say you love school. It would be good if a few of you could persuade your parents to not take you on holidays during the school term because you could miss really important work.

You can help too by continuing to work hard and doing your very best. Thank you again for being so helpful and friendly when we came to see you.

We hope that you will all do well in the future.

Yours sincerely

Rajinder Harrison

Lead inspector