

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: The Priors School

School Lane, Priors Marston, Southam, Warwickshire CV47 7RR

Inspection dates:

10 December 2024

Outcome

The Priors School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Ricky Emms. This school is part of Warriner Multi-Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Annabel Kay, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Duncan Raper.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils come into The Priors School happy and eager to learn each day. The school sets high expectations of pupils' behaviour and achievement. During lessons and at social times pupils are well behaved. They are polite and well-mannered. Pupils know there are trusted adults in school with whom can share any worries or concerns. The school does all it can to ensure pupils attend regularly and on time. Most pupils do. Pupils are happy and safe.

Most pupils achieve well, particularly in reading. Visitors to school deepen pupils' knowledge of the curriculum, such as authors and poets. Recently pupils relished the opportunity to work with a poet to write 'silly poems.' They also took part in a poetry competition. Pupils are proud to take on responsibilities in school such as school councillors and pupil leaders. They enjoy keeping physically healthy by taking part in the daily mile.

Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school and the quality of education their children receive. One parent's comment on Ofsted's Parent View Survey was typical of many when they said: 'I feel incredibly proud that my child attends The Priors School. It is such a lovely and supportive school community.'

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

The school has adopted an ambitious curriculum for all pupils. It is carefully designed and sequenced. Learning builds over time with clear end points. In some areas, the curriculum has recently been reviewed. However, the school has not ensured that staff have the necessary knowledge and skills they need to teach these areas of the curriculum. This means that pupils on occasion do not learn the curriculum in these subjects as well as they could. Recent work on developing mathematical fluency has been carefully thought through. The school has not made swift enough checks on the effectiveness of this work. The schools' oversight of how well pupils learn the curriculum is variable. This is because the school does not always check how well the curriculum is being delivered in some subjects.

Pupils' work is well presented. Staff support pupils to check and improve their work. However, work given to pupils is not always challenging enough to make them think hard. This means that at times, some pupils do not achieve as well as they could.

The school prioritises reading. Activities such as author visits, the one hundred books reading challenge, reading rewards and world book day help create a love of reading in school. Staff are highly skilled in the school's approach to teaching reading, including phonics. Pupils enjoy phonics lessons and apply their 'monster sounds' when reading books that match these sounds. Pupils read and are read to regularly in school. Parents and carers value reading workshops which help them to support their child when reading at home. Pupils who fall behind are identified and supported to catch up quickly, which they do. Pupils learn to read very well, at least with the fluency and accuracy expected for their age.

Children in the early years settle well into school life. Adults carefully plan learning to build on what children know and can do. Communication and language are prioritised. Children learn to read and write simple words and sentences with growing confidence and accuracy. They learn to recognise patterns and shapes in the environment. Children listen, take turns and share. All this means that children get off to a great start in their learning.

Pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are identified swiftly. However, some pupils with SEND struggle to complete work set. This is because staff do not always adjust learning successfully or provide enough time to practise. This means that pupils with SEND do not always achieve as well as they could.

The school has a well thought through wider curriculum offer. Pupils learn about how to keep safe, such as online, near water, railways and roads. They develop a rich understanding of healthy and safe relationships and the qualities of a good friend. Pupils learn about different faiths and cultures, such as Hannukah and the importance of light to the Jewish faith. This prepares them well for life in modern Britain.

The school has recently joined the Warriner Multi-Academy Trust. Leaders know the school's strengths and priorities for improvement. The trust has not yet worked with the school to ensure that effective checks on how well pupils learn the curriculum are consistently in place in all subjects.

Staff enjoy working at the school. They are highly positive about the support from leaders to manage their workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve? (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, staff do not have the knowledge and skills to teach the curriculum well enough. This means that pupils on occasion do not learn the curriculum in these subjects as well as they could. The school should ensure that staff have the necessary knowledge and skills to teach the curriculum so that pupils achieve well in all areas.
- Staff do not always know how to adjust learning so that pupils get the right level of challenge or support to access it. This means that at times some pupils, including some pupils with SEND, struggle to understand the learning. The school should ensure that staff know how to adapt learning successfully so that pupils learn the curriculum well, particularly pupils with SEND.
- The school does not check closely enough on the delivery of the curriculum in some subjects. This means that oversight of how well pupils learn the curriculum is variable. The trust should work with the school to ensure effective oversight of the curriculum, and that the impact of any improvements to the curriculum are rigorously evaluated.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 for overall effectiveness in April 2015.

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](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	137488
Local authority	Warwickshire
Inspection number	10371385
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	100
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of board of trustees	Duncan Raper
CEO of the trust	Annabel Kay
Headteacher	Ricky Emms
Website	www.thepriorsschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	28 November 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school joined the Warriner Multi-Academy Trust since the last inspection.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The school roll has increased since the last inspection following an increase in pupil admission numbers to 15 pupils per year group.
- The school provides a before- and after-school club for its pupils.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- The inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspectors observed informal times of the day as part of their evaluation of safeguarding and pupils' behaviour.
- The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and other senior leaders. The lead inspector met with trustees and the CEO. The inspectors also talked to pupils, staff and parents to gather information about school life.
- The inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View and the free-text comments. The inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

Inspection team

Lorraine Lord, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Sam Cosgrove

Ofsted Inspector

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