



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

PRIORY SCHOOL

REGULATORY COMPLIANCE INSPECTION

26 to 27 April 2016



School's Details

Full Name of School	Priory School
DfE Number	330/6002
EYFS Number	EY289773
Registered Charity Number	518009
Address	Priory School Sir Harry's Road Edgbaston Birmingham West Midlands B15 2UR
Telephone Number	0121 440 4103
Email Address	enquiries@prioryschool.net
Headmaster	Mr Jonathan Cramb
Proprietor	Mr Christopher Beesley
Age Range	6 months to 18 years
Total Number of Pupils	464
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (314 boys; 150 girls)
Early Years Foundation Stage	103
Pupils' Ability	Standardised tests indicate that the ability of the pupils is above the national average.
Pupils' Needs	The number of pupils requiring support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is twenty-one. Four pupils have statements of special educational needs or an education, health and care (EHC) plan. They require support with their learning needs. The school has eleven pupils who have English as an additional language (EAL), of whom five receive support from the school.

School's Details

History of the School	The school was founded in 1933 by the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus. When the order withdrew in 1986, the school continued as a girls' school and became fully co-educational in 2011.
Ownership and Governing Structure	The school is a company limited by public guarantee. It is a registered charity with a governing body.
School Structure	The prep school admits pupils from the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) to Year 6; and the senior school is for pupils from Years 7-13. The sixth form was established in 2012 and currently has 21 pupils.
Inspection Dates	26 April 2016 to 27 April 2016
Other Useful Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none">(i) The school is an independent Catholic day school which welcomes pupils of all denominations and faiths, or of no faith.(ii) The school occupies a single site with its own playing fields and sports facilities in Edgbaston.(iii) The EYFS provides part-time and full-time places for children for up to 51 weeks per annum.

About the Inspection

The registration authority for independent schools is the Department for Education (DfE), which directs inspection according to a specified frequency or at any time where the DfE has particular concerns about a school. The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and reporting on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards (“the standards”) in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. Accordingly, inspection records whether the school meets each of these standards, which are arranged in eight Parts, each of which is divided into separate paragraphs. Additionally, the inspection reports on the school’s accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996.

All association independent schools will have an inspection within three years from April 2016, in accordance with the Framework. The inspection may be of COMPLIANCE ONLY or of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY AND COMPLIANCE depending on a number of factors, including findings from their most recent inspection. Schools judged not to meet the standards following their inspection may also be subject to a progress monitoring visit before their next routine inspection. The progress monitoring visit will judge whether the school has taken the necessary action to meet any un-met standards and any qualitative concerns identified at their previous inspection.

This is a COMPLIANCE ONLY inspection and as such reports only on the school’s compliance with the standards. The standards represent minimum requirements and judgements are given either as **met** or as **not met**. All schools are required to meet all the standards applicable to them. Where the minimum requirements are not met this is clearly indicated in the relevant section of the report and the school is required to take the actions specified.

The inspection does not include matters that are outside of the regulatory framework described above, such as:

- (i) the school’s aims;
- (ii) an exhaustive health and safety audit;
- (iii) compliance with data protection requirements
- (iv) an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features;
- (v) contractual arrangements with parents
- (vi) an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures.

Where necessary, National Curriculum nomenclature is used to refer to year groups. Links to the full regulations and requirements can be found here: [The Independent School Standards Regulations](#), [Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework](#).

SUMMARY EVALUATION

The school meets the standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and the requirements of the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage and associated requirements and no further action is required as a result of this inspection.

PART 1

Quality of education provided

The prep school uses its own framework to determine attainment, instead of the national framework.

At GCSE, in the years 2012 to 2014, performance has been above the national average for maintained schools.

In the sixth form, A-level results in 2014 are below the national average for sixth formers in maintained schools.

The curriculum is documented, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work for the pupils and covers the required breadth of material. The teaching enables pupils to make good progress, encompasses effective behaviour management and is supported by suitable resources. A suitable framework for the assessment of pupil performance is in place.

The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1 - 4] are met.

PART 2

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Principles and values are actively promoted which facilitate the personal development of pupils as responsible, tolerant, law-abiding citizens.

The standard relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] is met.

PART 3

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils by means that pay due regard to current statutory guidance; good behaviour is promoted; bullying is prevented so far as reasonably practicable; health and safety requirements are met, including those relating to fire safety; provision is made for first aid. Pupils are properly supervised; admission and attendance registers are maintained, as required, and there is a suitable approach to risk assessment. A disability access plan is in place.

The standards relating to welfare, health and safety [paragraphs 6 - 16], the requirement of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996 are met.

PART 4

Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors and a register is kept as required.

The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school [paragraphs 17 - 21] are met.

PART 5

Premises of and accommodation at schools

Suitable toilet, changing and showering facilities for pupils and appropriate accommodation for their medical needs are provided. The premises are maintained to a standard commensurate with the requirements of health and safety; acoustics and lighting are appropriate; water provision is adequate. Suitable outdoor space is provided for physical education and outdoor play.

The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22 - 31] are met.

PART 6

Provision of information

A range of information is variously published, provided or made available to parents, inspectors and the Department for Education. These include details about the proprietor, the ethos of the school and the curriculum, and of the school's arrangements for admission, behaviour and exclusions, bullying, health and safety, first aid, details of the complaints procedure, and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year, and the provision for those with Education, Health and Care plans or English as an Additional Language. They also include particulars of the school's academic performance during the preceding school year, and its results in public examinations, inspection reports and (for parents only) a report at least annually of their own child's progress. The safeguarding policy is posted on the school's website.

The standards relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] are met.

PART 7

Manner in which complaints are handled

Parental complaints, if any, are handled effectively through a three-stage process, (informal, formal and a hearing before a panel of three, one of whom is independent of the school). Each stage has clear time scales, and at the third stage the panel can make findings and recommendations which are communicated to the complainant. Records are kept appropriately, including of any action taken, whether or not a complaint is successful.

The standard relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] is met.

PART 8

Quality of leadership in and management of schools

The proprietor ensures that the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the other standards are consistently met and they actively promote the well-being of the pupils.

The standard relating to leadership and management of the school [Paragraph 34] is met.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

Overall effectiveness: the quality and standards of the early years provision

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision is outstanding.

As a result of the learning and care provided, all children make rapid progress relative to their starting points so that they are well prepared for school from Year 1 onwards. Those children with SEND or EAL have their needs met most effectively with strong support and interventions both within the school and where appropriate from outside agencies. The children's personal, emotional and social development is excellent. Children feel very safe, secure and happy in the setting.

Members of staff have an excellent understanding of safeguarding and welfare requirements. Both collectively and individually, they are diligent in fulfilling their responsibilities for protecting the children in their care. The leadership and management evaluate practice successfully and ensure a strong focus on continuous improvement, with members of staff evaluating the progress and monitoring the welfare of each child, and further developing the curriculum. Through the development of a wooded area, the school has met most effectively the recommendation of the previous inspection to provide further opportunities for children to explore their surroundings, to investigate and to use their imagination.

Effectiveness of leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding.

The leadership has an excellent strategic vision for the continued development of the setting. It places strong emphasis on self-evaluation to improve the quality of provision, and to sustain this improvement and implement new ideas. The governor nominated to liaise with the EYFS is in regular contact with the setting and works closely with its management in order to keep the governing body well informed.

The leadership listens carefully to the views of parents and is also responsive to the children's ideas. In their pre-inspection questionnaire responses and in interview, most parents expressed extremely positive views about the setting, the progress their children make and the prompt way with which their concerns are dealt. A small minority of parents said that they do not receive good information about their children's progress, the school and its activities. Those parents who were interviewed indicated that the information which they receive is helpful, and inspection evidence supports this view. The school takes effective and appropriate action in response to parental suggestions. Parents feel welcomed into the school community. They say they are well informed about the setting, and value the daily contact that they have with very approachable staff who know their children well.

The leadership carefully monitors the delivery of the curriculum and ensures that the members of staff maintain high expectations for the children whilst providing excellent standards of care and covering all required areas of learning with sufficient depth and breadth. A formal system of appraisal is in place to ensure that areas for professional development are identified. The approach to coaching members of the EYFS staff, in order to provide them with fully effective supervision and targeted support for their work with children and their families, is not completely embedded in the practice of the setting. Learning programmes are meticulously planned and cover all areas of learning in the EYFS. For example at an early stage of language acquisition, communication skills are encouraged through songs, rhymes and stories. Specialists within the school through carefully targeted interventions successfully support children with SEND or EAL. The leadership and management ensure that all such children are provided with extra help and resources where needed to enable them to reach the expected levels.

Regular assessments are employed to monitor the progress that the children are making and to track their development. Transition to the next stage of their learning is sensitively handled with many opportunities for children to get to know their new surroundings and staff. For example, Reception children have lunch and attend assemblies with pupils in Year 1 and 2.

The leadership ensures that the values of respect, tolerance and kindness are actively promoted through class rules. Displays celebrate cultural diversity and children respect each other's differences. The leadership also makes sure that the behaviour of the children is managed most effectively; it is successful in discouraging bullying of all forms. Welfare and child protection requirements, including the need to prevent extremist ideas taking root, are rigorously adhered to by all members of staff. Staff have received suitable training in safeguarding including the Prevent strategy, and health and safety procedures.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding.

The well-qualified members of staff have an excellent understanding of the requirements of the EYFS and how young children learn. They are adept at guiding the children to explore and investigate new activities appropriate to their stage of development. Staff have high expectations of how the children may develop their capacities and skills, thereby preparing children most effectively for the next steps of their education.

Incisive assessment information is gathered from analysing what children already know, understand and can do. The comprehensive records of learning provide details of each child's achievements set against the early learning goals. Thus progress is easily tracked and coverage of the seven areas of learning is ensured. Initial assessments enable staff to gain insight into the individual needs of each child when they enter the setting. Members of staff know when to intervene to move a child's learning forward and when to encourage children to persist and try again.

All members of the EYFS staff are involved in developing and planning the curriculum carefully so that the interests and abilities of each child are very well met. They are skilled at adapting the activities to take account of the learning situations that arise spontaneously. For example the Nursery topic on opposites included a discussion on the size of dinosaurs, which was prompted by a child's comments. The curriculum is further enhanced by the inclusion of music, French and physical education, which are all taught most effectively by specialist staff. The more able receive extension activities and challenging questions. Well-planned interventions for those with SEND or EAL support their learning, ensuring that all make rapid progress.

An excellent balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities provides children with opportunities to problem solve, create their own play and explore their ideas both inside and outside. The development of the outdoor learning environment has allowed a greater emphasis on creative work. All children receive opportunities to develop excellent speaking and listening skills; the under twos were observed joining in with nursery rhymes. Focused daily learning in reading, writing and numbers is a significant feature of provision for the older children and helps prepare them for their next stage of their learning.

Parents are provided information about how to support their children's learning at home and are invited to attend workshops about various aspects of the curriculum. Arrangements for the required checks for two-year-old children are in place. Parents are kept well informed about their children's progress through parent consultation evenings and the informal day-to-day contact that they have with staff. Written reports also provide information on each child's progress and suggest next steps. Parents are actively encouraged to contribute to their children's learning in a variety of ways, including by borrowing the 'busy bags' which contain activities for use at home.

Through the variety of backgrounds and cultures within the setting's inclusive community, members of staff encourage children to understand their individual differences and to respect one another. For example: parents of different faiths and cultures are invited to talk to the children; the setting celebrated the Queen's 90th birthday, harvest festival, and Chinese New Year; and children created Rangoli patterns for Diwali.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

The personal development, behaviour and welfare of the children is outstanding.

Members of staff provide a highly stimulating environment and wide range of activities, and children participate in the school day with enthusiasm. Both indoors and outdoors, children are curious, confident and effective learners who engage enthusiastically in open-ended tasks. 'Treasure boxes' and topics such as 'superheroes' and 'aliens love underpants' engage children's concentration and imagination; an outdoor activity for children in Reception involved sorting underpants by size and counting them. Supported by the considered feedback they receive, children develop high levels of self-confidence and display growing independence as they explore their surroundings. They have an evident love of their school and are happy and confident. Children understand the importance of making contributions to help those with fewer advantages within the wider society.

Children's social awareness and emotional security is fostered extremely well, facilitating their transition through each stage of the EYFS. Practitioners are highly sensitive towards the needs of the children and demonstrate high standards of care and hygiene practices. The children are exceptionally well behaved and readily co-operate with each other. For example children under three displayed care and consideration when finding their sleeping area, ensuring that they did not disturb their friends who were already asleep. A healthy lifestyle is successfully promoted by the provision of freshly prepared lunches and snacks, and access to the sports hall and outside areas for exercise.

Systems for registration and tracking absence ensure high levels of attendance and that children are duly accounted for. Adults provide excellent role models, ensuring that the children feel safe and secure. Children display a sense of achievement and pride when talking about their work, and a conscientious commitment to their learning. This is evident within class and also when they move around the school. The need for safety including when using the internet and social media is communicated to the children most effectively.

Outcomes for children

Outcomes for children are outstanding.

The children make excellent progress relative to their starting points, abilities and needs, with the majority reaching or exceeding the expected levels of attainment by the end of Reception. They are very enthusiastic learners who are keen to explore their surroundings and use their imagination. Children are successfully prepared for the next stage of their education.

The youngest children, with support from adults, are able to clap to rhymes and shake instruments. The two year olds are able to select books and respond to stories with enjoyment. Their fine motor skills are developing well; they are able to manipulate a mouse to draw pictures and can mark-make using chalk. The over threes were observed using cameras and simple voice-recording devices as part of a topic on alien life. Children were observed playing co-operatively, for example when building dens based on a story that they had heard. Those in the Reception successfully apply their phonic skills to write simple sentences, and they are developing their decoding strategies for reading. They are able to recognise numbers to twenty and beyond, and can perform simple calculations using coins. The setting is highly successful in meeting its aim to provide a safe and caring environment in which every child can flourish.

Compliance with statutory requirements

The school's registered provision for childcare meets the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 and no action is required.

Recommendation for further improvement

The school is advised to make the following improvement.

- Develop further the approach to coaching members of the EYFS staff in order to provide them with more targeted support for work with children and their families.

About the inspection

The inspectors observed a small sample of lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with teachers, senior members of staff and with a member of the governing body. They attended registration sessions and observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities which occurred during the inspection period. Inspectors visited the facilities for sick or injured pupils. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Dr Christopher Ray	Reporting Inspector
Mr Steven Popper	Accompanying Inspector
Mrs Ros Ford	Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years
Ms Diana Green	Team Inspector for Early Years (Head of Pre-prep, IAPS school)