

Priors Wood Primary School

Address: Cozens Road, SG12 7HZ

Unique reference number (URN): 117271

Inspection report: 6 January 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	●
Expected standard	● ● ● ● ●
Needs attention	●
Urgent improvement	

✓ Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Strong standard ●

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard ●

A well planned and ambitious curriculum for personal, social and health education is delivered expertly by teachers. As a result, pupils acquire deep and secure knowledge of some key issues, such as the risks associated with smartphone use as they get older. Pupils understand the importance of a healthy, balanced diet and how to spot the signs of poor mental health. The statutory elements of the relationships and sex education and health education curriculum are sensitively planned and taught, at an age-appropriate level. Pupils' understanding of issues relating to equality and diversity is excellent. They learn about various belief systems and philosophies through high-quality religious education (RE). This leads pupils to develop tolerance and understanding of religious and cultural differences. Initiatives such as the school council and 'Parliament day' support pupils' knowledge of fundamental British values, for example democracy. All of this means pupils are eminently well prepared for later life.

Leaders provide pupils with a carefully crafted range of wider opportunities to enhance their learning and maximise their life chances. Pupils who face barriers through disadvantage or other factors are at the forefront of leaders' minds as they design this offer. For example, pupils in Year 1 travelled by bus and train, some for the first time, to visit a nearby leisure park. Pupils in Year 4 enriched and deepened their learning in RE by visiting a Hindu temple in north London. A wide range of clubs enables pupils to extend their existing skills or discover new interests. All pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, have access to the full gamut of wider opportunities. Participation in optional clubs is high among all groups of pupils. In some instances, leaders set up new extra-curricular activities to provide opportunities for particular groups or in response to pupils' own suggestions, such as art club and some sports clubs.

Expected standard ●

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard ●

Overall attendance figures are close to the national average and improving. This upward trend is a result of leaders' actions and their promotion of the importance of regular attendance. Leaders and staff build warm, trusting relationships with pupils and their families, so pupils want to come to school. When a pupil's attendance causes concern, leaders spot this quickly, thanks to their oversight and analysis of attendance figures. They take appropriate action to support improvement, for example by offering free places at the school's breakfast club.

Leaders have put in place a 'good learner statement' to support pupils' behaviour in lessons. This reminds pupils of the school's expectations and how to maximise learning opportunities. Pupils try hard to meet these expectations and, as a result, learning is rarely disrupted. Pupils socialise happily at breaktimes and lunchtimes. In the early years, during unstructured times, children play and learn cooperatively. They share resources and work together on common projects, such as retrieving toys frozen in the ice.

Some pupils need additional help to follow school routines and to be ready for learning. Leaders and staff are skilled at providing supportive activities that encourage pupils to self-regulate. Staff understand and apply the school's behaviour policy well.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Since the last inspection, leaders have strengthened the curriculum. They have developed an ambitious curriculum that is carefully thought through to build pupils' learning over time. In most subjects, the curriculum is well established. In one or 2 subjects, it is newer and leaders are acting to ensure that staff are suitably trained to teach it effectively. There is a strong focus on language development and the key skills pupils need in each subject area. Leaders ensure that pupils' early reading, writing and mathematical understanding are priorities. They check regularly how well pupils are learning, so they can adjust the curriculum if needed.

Leaders ensure that teachers' subject knowledge is sound. Typically, teachers model new learning clearly and check pupils' understanding effectively, so that pupils' learning is secure. Teachers know which pupils need additional support, and which pupils have gaps in their knowledge. They adapt their teaching and adjust provision so that all pupils can achieve well. For example, some pupils receive one-to-one support to reinforce their learning of the letters and sounds needed for fluent reading. Other pupils use practical resources that staff provide to support their understanding of numbers. Occasionally, teachers' adaptations of teaching and the tasks they design are not well matched to pupils' needs. This hinders some pupils' progress through the curriculum.

Early years

Expected standard 

In the early years, leaders have ensured there is a well-planned, ambitious curriculum in place. It sets out what children need to learn as they move through the Nursery and Reception classes, with a strong focus on the acquisition of new language. Children progress well through the curriculum and, overall, leave Reception well prepared for Year 1.

Leaders and staff build relationships with parents and carers before children join the school. This supports children's transition into the early years. Once attending, children benefit from the warm, caring relationships with staff that exist throughout the school. Staff use skilful interactions with children to move learning on. They model new language and give children opportunities to rehearse their use of this. Staff set up activities that allow children to consolidate their learning through play. For example, in Nursery, children develop their fine motor skills using cookie cutters to make 'gingerbread men', following a reading of a classic story.

Leaders prioritise early reading, writing and mathematics. Stories, songs and rhymes are threaded through children's daily routines. For example, in Nursery, children recognise sounds and clap rhythms, in pre-phonics activities. In Reception, they progress to learning the letters and sounds needed for successful word and sentence reading.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders pride themselves on getting to know pupils well and identifying any additional needs they have as early as possible. They plan provision for pupils carefully, so that any barriers to learning are reduced or removed. For pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), leaders are quick to seek specialist advice, where this is appropriate. Staff work effectively with pupils' families and external professionals to enable pupils with SEND to access the curriculum successfully.

Leaders ensure that staff are suitably equipped to meet the range of pupils' needs. For example, some staff are trained to support pupils' speech, language and communication needs. Others are mental health first aiders. Pastoral care is a priority and the school responds quickly to pupils' wellbeing needs so that they are ready to learn.

Leaders have developed clear processes to support the planning and delivery of support for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND. They oversee provision and check it is working well. Currently, the targets set in pupils' learning plans and by leaders for the support of disadvantaged pupils lack precision. Leaders have plans to address this, so that the support pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils receive is as effective as possible.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Governors have a range of experience and skills. They use these to support their oversight and the long-term direction for the school's development. Governors carry out their roles effectively, including meeting their statutory duties. They share leaders' pupil-centred vision and provide suitable support and challenge to enable leaders to realise their ambitious goals.

Leaders and governors are committed to supporting staff's wellbeing and developing their expertise. This leads to a highly motivated staff group and ensures staff are able to fulfil their roles. When making decisions, such as the introduction of new curriculum materials, leaders always consider the impact on staff workload, as well as the benefits to pupils.

Leaders and governors carry out a range of activities to check how well things are working across the school. Most of the time, this gives them a clear understanding of the school's strengths, as well as the areas for development. On occasion, leaders' work to improve the school is less impactful because their scrutiny and analysis of some aspects of the school's work are less clear.

Leaders are outward-facing. They engage very effectively with parents and carers, who hold a highly positive view of the school. Leaders build mutually supportive links with colleagues in other local schools. These relationships play an important role in leaders' work on school improvement and staff development.

Achievement

In the Year 1 phonics screening check, pupils' attainment is below average. Some of pupils' attainment in Year 6, such as disadvantaged pupils' reading and writing and pupils working at a higher level, is below average. The quality of work in pupils' books is variable, with weaknesses evident particularly in writing. Some pupils do not develop some of the essential knowledge that they need in phonics and writing. Leaders have taken action to address these aspects of pupils' achievement, but more time is needed for the impact of their work to be fully seen.

Nevertheless, many pupils achieve well. Overall, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make progress against their starting points. In mathematics and reading, pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 is in line with national averages. Pupils who need support in phonics receive this promptly and most pupils can read fluently by the end of Year 2. More regular handwriting lessons are impacting positively on the quality and accuracy of pupils' recorded work.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

Warm relationships between pupils and staff create a strong sense of belonging at this friendly, welcoming school. Pupils are respectful to each other, staff and visitors. They feel safe at school and trust staff to care for them well. Pupils attend regularly and benefit widely from the rich opportunities the school offers.

Staff's high expectations help pupils to behave well. In the early years, the youngest children in the school's Nursery and Reception classes settle quickly each day, thanks to the clear routines staff set up for them. Older pupils act as positive role models for younger pupils, for example in their capacity as play leaders and 'assembly monitors'. Bullying is rare. Pupils are confident that staff will help them resolve any friendship issues that arise.

Pupils work hard. They are enthusiastic learners and enjoy talking about what they know. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) learn alongside their peers. Staff know each pupil individually and understand their needs extremely well. They take steps to reduce or remove any barriers to success that pupils may face. Overall, pupils' achievement is improving. Many pupils reach the expected standard in national tests. However, the attainment of some groups, such as disadvantaged pupils, is below national averages. In some subjects, the proportion of pupils working at a higher level is also below national averages.

Pupils' needs and interests are carefully considered in the school's impressive programme for personal development. For example, to develop pupils' oracy and confidence in public speaking, the school offered pupils the opportunity to participate in a debating competition run by a nearby university. Pupils have a say in the extra-curricular clubs provided, such as dance, art and a wide range of sports. Disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND participate fully in this extensive programme. As a result, pupils are extremely well prepared for life beyond Priors Wood.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure they continue to develop teachers' expertise in adapting teaching and designing tasks to meet pupils' specific needs.
 - Leaders should ensure they increase the precision of the targets set for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, so that the support provided is well matched to pupils' needs and enables them to achieve more highly.
 - Leaders should further refine their detailed analysis of and insight about areas of the school's work, so that their actions to drive improvement are as effective as possible.
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About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Neil Garton.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, two assistant headteachers and the special educational needs coordinator during the inspection. The lead inspector met with governors, including the chair of governors. She spoke with the school's effectiveness adviser on the telephone.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

Headteacher : Alan Bishop

Lead inspector:

Caroline Crozier, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Mark Sim, Ofsted Inspector

Daniel Short, His Majesty's Inspector

Craige Brown, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.

 This data is from 6 January 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

222

Close to average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 272

School capacity

231

Close to average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 300

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

20.41%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

National average: 26.3%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

4.50%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.5%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

19.82%

Above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

Close to average

What does this mean?

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

All pupils' performance

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standards in a combined reading, writing and mathematics measure.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	55%	61%	Close to average
2024/25	48%	62%	Below
2023/24	65%	61%	Close to average
2022/23	55%	60%	Close to average

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	76%	74%	Close to average
2024/25	76%	75%	Close to average
2023/24	82%	74%	Above
2022/23	72%	73%	Close to average

Pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	65%	72%	Below
2024/25	64%	72%	Below
2023/24	71%	72%	Close to average
2022/23	62%	71%	Below

Pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	72%	73%	Close to average
2024/25	76%	74%	Close to average
2023/24	76%	73%	Close to average
2022/23	66%	73%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' performance

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	28%	46%	Below
2024/25	25%	47%	Below
2023/24	S	46%	S
2022/23	S	44%	S

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	50%	62%	Below
2024/25	38%	63%	Below
2023/24	S	62%	S
2022/23	S	60%	S

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	39%	59%	Below
2024/25	50%	59%	Close to average
2023/24	S	58%	S
2022/23	S	58%	S

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	50%	60%	Below
2024/25	63%	61%	Close to average
2023/24	S	59%	S
2022/23	S	59%	S

‘S’ in the table above indicates the data has been suppressed, which is usually due to small cohorts. The suppression rules applied by the DfE when publishing the data have been mirrored and applied in the report card.

Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics, including the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	28%	68%	-40 pp
2024/25	25%	69%	-44 pp
2023/24	S	67%	S
2022/23	S	66%	S

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	50%	80%	-30 pp
2024/25	38%	81%	-43 pp
2023/24	S	80%	S
2022/23	S	78%	S

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	39%	78%	-39 pp
2024/25	50%	78%	-28 pp
2023/24	S	78%	S

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23	S	77%	S

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	50%	80%	-30 pp
2024/25	63%	81%	-18 pp
2023/24	S	79%	S
2022/23	S	79%	S

‘S’ in the table above indicates the data has been suppressed, which is usually due to small cohorts. The suppression rules applied by the DfE when publishing the data have been mirrored and applied in the report card.

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 terms)	5.5%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24	5.2%	5.5%	Close to average
2022/23	5.8%	5.9%	Close to average

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 terms)	14.7%	13.3%	Close to average
2023/24	14.2%	14.6%	Close to average
2022/23	17.2%	16.2%	Close to average

Our grades explained

Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

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