

Princetown Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113261
Local Authority	Devon
Inspection number	378677
Inspection dates	19–20 October 2011
Reporting inspector	Denise Morris

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	64
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Katherine Beattie
Headteacher	Alison Hirst
Date of previous school inspection	29 September 2010
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They observed teaching and learning in six lessons taught by four teachers. Meetings were held with the headteacher, a member of the governing body, pupils, teachers and other leaders. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at safeguarding and planning documents, assessment information and pupils' work. Inspectors analysed 23 questionnaires from parents and carers. Responses from staff and pupils were also analysed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Whether the school's priorities for improving teaching and learning have been achieved and all groups of pupils are sufficiently challenged in lessons and through the curriculum.
- How the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage impacts on children's achievements, and that of boys in particular.
- Improvements in pupils' cultural development since the previous inspection and whether pupils now have a broad awareness of life in multicultural United Kingdom.

Information about the school

Princetown is a much smaller than average size school and is in a geographically remote village in the heart of Dartmoor National Park. The vast majority of pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is high. A larger than average proportion of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities, mainly speech and language difficulties. There is a higher than average mobility level with more pupils moving in and out of the school at times other than the normal start and finishing times. Pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a combined Reception/Year 1 class.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Princetown is a good school. It has improved since the previous inspection because of extensive training for staff, rigorous monitoring by leaders and close links with partner schools. 'Princetown is a very nurturing and caring environment. Since being here my child has blossomed into a confident and happy boy' is a typical written comment from a parent. Good quality partnerships have been a contributory factor in the establishment of the rich new curriculum which is having a positive impact on outcomes for pupils, particularly in aiding their personal development. For example, the increased use of the local Dartmoor facilities and environment has resulted in the effective promotion of pupils' well-being, improvements in their confidence and self-esteem and their excellent community links.

Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage with good provision for boys and girls. All groups achieve well during their time at the school. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve as well as their peers because of effective individual programmes. Standards are broadly average by Year 6. All pupils benefit from good teaching with positive relationships, good use of technology and careful support, leading to good progress. They make the best progress in reading and mathematics. Progress in writing is more limited. This is because a high number of pupils start school with language delay and some do not regularly do enough writing in the time allowed. In the older classes too few pupils use joined handwriting styles which impacts on their ability to write fluently and quickly enough.

Good quality care, guidance and support ensure that pupils feel secure and always have someone they can talk to. Pupils behave well and enjoy school. As a result their attendance is rising and is now above average. Older pupils take care of younger ones in the playground, for example they were observed helping younger ones to put their coats on and their hoods up on a very cold day. Pupils have an excellent awareness of healthy lifestyles. They regularly bring fruit for their packed lunches and make healthy choices from the good quality school menu. Pupils clearly know right from wrong because of effective social and moral development but their cultural development remains satisfactory because their awareness of the cultures that make up modern United Kingdom is limited. Provision to support pupils who enter the school at times other than the usual starting times are good. Parents are pleased with the school. As one explained, 'I can't praise the school highly enough, I feel they are very aware of my child's needs.'

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The headteacher has a clear vision for the future of the school. The accurate self-evaluation by leaders and managers shows that they are fully aware of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection and the school has a good capacity to continue improving. For example, effective attention to raising standards and improving attendance has succeeded well. Subject leaders and other staff are supportive and help new initiatives to move forward. Members of the governing body are helpful and challenging. Although they meet their statutory responsibilities fully, the strategy for community cohesion has yet to forge links wider afield so that it can impact on pupils' awareness of other cultures and lifestyles in the United Kingdom.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve achievement in writing by:
 - encouraging pupils to write more in the time allowed
 - increasing the range of practical writing activities that engage pupils' interest
 - improving handwriting particularly for the older pupils and ensuring that they develop a clear joined-up writing style.
- Improve pupils' awareness of the different cultures that make up society in the modern United Kingdom.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils' have low, and sometimes very low, starting points on entering the school. The school's good provision is successful in helping the majority to make good and, in some cases, for example in reading, outstanding progress. All groups of pupils achieve well and enjoy their learning. Most make the best progress in reading and in mathematics. Their attainment in these areas is rising as a result. Progress in writing is not as good because pupils do not always do enough writing in lessons. In the older classes not all pupils are developing a clear writing style that will help them in the future.

Good learning by pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 was observed as pupils developed their writing through the use of information and communication technology (ICT). This was evident in how pupils have been following a local cyclist in a national road race. They successfully interviewed the cyclist about the way he trains on Dartmoor. Because they were really interested in the task and because they already had a lot of knowledge about the rider, they were able to develop fact files quickly by retrieving information, designing a layout and writing a wide range of information quickly and efficiently. More-able pupils were able to work independently at a fast pace, extending their skills well. However, these approaches are not yet consistent. In a

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few lessons across the school too few practical tasks are planned to engage and encourage pupils to write down their ideas and thoughts. Pupils’ reading skills are improving rapidly, partly because of a regular phonics programme for the younger pupils, which gives them a good knowledge of the sounds that letters make.

Pupils behave well, clearly know right from wrong and there is a harmonious atmosphere in almost all lessons. Pupils’ good understanding of staying safe is reflected in the way they play safely in the playground and walk calmly around the school. Pupils make very healthy choices at lunchtimes and know the importance of taking regular exercise. Their excellent contribution to the local community is evident in the way they link with older people in the community and work regularly with other local schools. The regular residential trip to the Dartmoor Centre engages all pupils well and promotes very good awareness of the need to look after their environment. One boy who is relatively new to the school, having previously lived in a town, told inspectors how amazing it was to go on a trip to Dartmoor on his very first day. Pupils show their enjoyment of school in their rising attendance. They are well prepared for their futures.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils’ learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils’ behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Particularly good teaching for older pupils, characterised by strong relationships, exciting activities and practical tasks, results in some accelerated learning. In a mathematics lesson for example, lively teaching and well-planned tasks challenged pupils and high expectations of all the different ability groups led to clear progress

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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and understanding of square numbers. Positive attitudes are evident in all classes. Teaching assistants are well deployed and make a strong contribution to the learning of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The teaching of reading and mathematics is consistently effective. In the best lessons, pupils make good use of resources, engage in exciting games and activities which match the abilities of all groups, and enjoy solving problems to extend their skills. Assessment procedures have improved and are used regularly in all classes. However, occasionally expectations of what pupils can achieve in writing are not high enough.

A strong emphasis on creative experiences has resulted in a good curriculum which, though still developing, engages the majority of pupils well and helps them to rapidly improve their knowledge and skills. Pupils in Years 2 and 3, for example, took part in a Victorian day during the inspection. They used slates and chalk to write information from the board just as the Victorian children at their school did in the past. They had lots of fun, and made good progress, as they dressed in costume to enrich their experience. A very wide range of visits to places of interest and a high number of after-school clubs enrich pupils’ daily lives and contribute very well to their healthy lifestyles. Pupils regularly swim in the local pool and a high proportion of pupils have music tuition. Some exciting topics help pupils to learn about the wider world. A recent topic on ethical farming, for example, has enabled greater understanding of world trade by older pupils and has had a positive impact on their future economic well-being.

Pupils are well cared for. Their personal needs are met effectively and welfare arrangements are thorough. Good quality guidance and support have a positive impact on pupils’ behaviour. Transition and induction arrangements are very good at helping pupils to settle quickly. Procedures to support pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable are very effective because of close and productive links with support agencies.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils’ needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders are driving improvement in all areas of the school. The headteacher has a clear vision for the future. She is ably supported by the whole staff team. Accurate self-evaluation has ensured that leaders know what is working well and what needs improving. Assessment and tracking of pupils’ outcomes have improved since the previous inspection and now provide leaders with an accurate view of pupils’

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progress and achievements. Teaching has improved and is at least good in all classes. Leaders are aware that standards in writing require improvement and plans are well advanced to address this. Staff training has increased and monitoring is rigorous. All of the staff who responded to the inspection questionnaires said that they are proud to work at the school. Senior managers have embedded their ambition for the school by working closely with other local schools as part of a consortium. This has resulted in some productive experiences for pupils which will serve them well in the future. For example, regular sporting links for older pupils enable them to build friendships with a wider group of peers of their own age ready for their transfer to secondary school.

Leaders carefully eliminate discrimination and promote equality by ensuring that opportunities are open to all and by rigorously tracking outcomes for all groups. The governing body is knowledgeable and supportive and regularly offers challenge to leaders about decisions. Governors fully meet their statutory responsibilities. The school’s strategy for community cohesion is developing appropriately. A link with a school in Spain has been established and pupils are beginning to learn Spanish as a result, but there are too few opportunities for pupils to improve their awareness of the different cultures that make up the United Kingdom. Close local partnerships promote effective working relationships with the community, the church and the local prison ensuring that pupils are proud of their local area. Regular and robust links with parents contribute well to pupils’ improving attendance. Safeguarding procedures, including those for child protection, are good and fully meet current government guidelines. They are rigorously monitored and the site is very safe and secure.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

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Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enjoy their time in the Reception class where they share their learning with pupils in Year 1. Their accommodation is good and staff make the best use of the outdoor area to supplement learning. Children benefit from a broad range of interesting and appropriate activities. During the inspection, children showed how much they enjoyed playing outdoors with their older peers. They are confident that older pupils will look after them and quickly develop confidence in their relationships and behave well. They show good personal development as they help each other, take turns and make choices. Children are kind and polite. They show good understanding of eating healthily and are safe and secure.

Children make good progress in all areas during their time in the Reception class. By the time they enter Year 1 many are catching up rapidly. They make the best progress in reading. In one session, for example, where they were playing a game to recognise cards with different letter sounds, children were really eager to be the first to say the sound and they worked hard to get the most cards, having fun while they did so.

Good leadership ensures that children are well looked after. Welfare arrangements are rigorous and children’s achievements are regularly annotated so that their individual progress can be tracked from the start of their Reception Year. Children benefit from good quality support so they are confident to ask for help. Good teaching enables them to improve their skills and enjoy their learning but just occasionally there are too few adults available to extend children’s language, particularly in the outdoor learning area. Staff know children well. They encourage them to tidy up their own toys and develop their independence.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers are pleased with the school. A small minority responded to the parental questionnaire and most of these are supportive of the school’s work. ‘I can’t praise the staff highly enough’, wrote a parent. Another commented, ‘Our child is very excited to go to school each morning.’ All the parents and carers who responded said that their child enjoys school and believe that the school keeps their children safe. A very few do not think the school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour. Inspection evidence found behaviour across the school to be good with

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effective strategies in place to manage any challenging behaviour. These concerns, and all other comments, were shared and discussed with the headteacher and members of the governing body.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Princetown Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 23 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 64 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	17	74	6	26	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	9	39	14	61	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	10	43	11	48	1	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	10	43	11	48	1	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	13	57	10	43	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	9	39	14	61	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	13	57	10	43	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	5	22	15	65	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	9	39	14	61	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	6	26	11	48	2	9	2	9
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	8	35	13	57	2	9	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	11	48	10	43	1	4	1	4
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	15	65	8	35	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



21 October 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Princetown Primary School, Yelverton PL20 6QE

Thank you for your help in our recent inspection of your school. This letter is to tell you some of the things we found out during our visit. Yours is a good school, and we agree with what you told us – it is a really fun place to learn. Here is a list of some of the things that we think are really good.

- You make good progress in your time at the school.
- Those of you who find learning difficult try hard to succeed and achieve well.
- You told us that you enjoy coming to school and you now come to school more often than you used to. Your attendance is better than in most other schools. Well done for that!
- You told us all about your healthy lifestyles and we could see that you do lots of exercise and keep very fit.
- We were very pleased to see how older pupils take care of younger ones in the playground.
- Your teachers take good care of you and keep you safe and secure.
- We like the way that you are looking after your environment and are proud of it.

We are asking your school to do two things to help you to do even better. We want your teachers to make sure that you are helped to make the same good progress in writing as you do in other subjects. We also want your headteacher and staff to make sure you are given the chance to find out more about people in other parts of the country that are different from where you live.

In turn, you must all carry on listening carefully and take note of what your teachers say. Then you will continue to make good or even better progress in your learning.

Thank you again for your help.

Denise Morris
Lead inspector

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