

# Princecroft Primary School

Princecroft Lane, Warminster, Wiltshire, BA12 8NT

**Inspection dates** 28 February–1 March 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Teachers do not always set work that is at the right level of difficulty for the pupils, especially the more-able learners.
- Teachers' feedback to pupils does not always give clear enough guidance on how pupils can improve their work. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to make these improvements.
- Pupils' achievement over time has been too variable in English and mathematics and their progress has not been consistent
- Activities do not provide pupils with enough exciting learning opportunities. The school does not offer enough chances for pupils to extend and enrich their learning beyond the classroom.

### The school has the following strengths

- In the short time that they have been at the school, the two interim headteachers have started to improve the quality of teaching and this is beginning to raise pupil achievement. Their clear vision has moved the school forwards.
- The new governing body is now able to draw on a range of skills that enable it to challenge yet support the leadership team in their efforts to raise outcomes for pupils.
- The improvements in pupils' behaviour over recent months have been recognised by both parents and carers and the pupils themselves. This has resulted in pupils being more engaged in lessons and enjoying their learning.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed seven lessons with two of the lessons being jointly observed with each of the headteachers. The inspector also watched a whole-school assembly.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and another member, and senior and middle leaders. The inspector also held a telephone conversation with a local authority adviser.
- The inspector listened to pupils read and looked at samples of the pupils' workbooks.
- The inspector looked at a wide range of documents, including the school's own information on pupils' recent progress, planning and monitoring documentation, and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding arrangements.
- The inspector took into account the 13 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). The inspector held discussions with six parents and carers when they dropped their children off at school. The responses to 18 staff questionnaires were also considered.

## Inspection team

David Hogg, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Princecroft is much smaller than most primary schools.
- In September 2012, two interim headteachers were appointed, one of whom will lead the school from April 2013.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium is above average. This is additional government funding for looked after children, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and pupils with a parent in the armed services.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is well below average with very few speaking English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils or those with special educational needs and those who are supported at school action is in line with the national average. The proportion supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently at least good and results in pupils making faster progress, by:
  - making sure that teachers use information on pupils' abilities to plan activities that are at the right level of difficulty, particularly for the more-able or more-confident learners
  - making sure that all pupils are given high-quality guidance on how to improve their work and are then given the chance to respond to this feedback.
- Develop activities, both within and outside the classroom, that will provide more exciting and memorable opportunities to further engage the pupils in their learning.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils **requires improvement**

- The achievement of pupils, whatever their background, over time has been variable and inconsistent between year groups. Following recent improvements, the school's own current data indicate that progress is generally now broadly in line with national expectations, with some groups of pupils making good progress.
- Data previously held by the school was of variable quality but the school's new systems have ensured that tracking of pupils' progress is more rigorous, and the quality of pupils' work is now checked thoroughly, for example in pupils' progress meetings. As a result, senior leaders can now make sure that pupils who may need additional support or challenge are identified quickly and monitored closely.
- Children enter the school in the Reception class with skills that are generally below national expectations, especially in the aspects of literacy and communication skills. Good teaching and effective use of resources ensure that the pupils have a good start to school so that by the time they leave Year 1 they have caught up and are working at national expectations.
- The senior team recognised quickly that improvements were needed in the quality of the teaching of English to raise pupils' achievement in this subject. Data show that the targeted training for staff has been effective in raising standards. The school is now focusing on accelerating pupils' progress in mathematics.
- The progress made by disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is in line with that of other pupils. Targeted support for these pupils' work is monitored closely to check on its effectiveness. The in-class support given by teaching assistants enables pupils with a range of particular needs to work successfully within the class.
- Pupils who are eligible for support through the pupil premium are monitored very closely as they are viewed as a high-priority group within the school. Currently, they make similar progress to other children. Although the average point scores in English and mathematics for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals have been lower than those of other pupils, better progress for this group is now helping to close the gap in achievement.
- In the Reception and Year 1 class, work on letters and sounds (phonics) is taught well and children are able to blend and build unfamiliar words effectively. Although pupils in Year 1 achieved well in the national screening check, some older children have weaker phonics skills and struggle when reading. The teaching of reading is now improving in quality and such weaknesses are now being tackled.

### The quality of teaching **requires improvement**

- The quality of teaching over time has not been strong enough to ensure that pupils make good progress. Recent evidence, including observations of teaching during the inspection, show that although teaching still requires improvement overall, teachers' skills and confidence are increasing.
- Teachers are now beginning to use pupils' progress data to match classroom tasks to the abilities of most pupils. However, work set for the most able is often too easy and does not challenge these pupils enough. As a result, some pupils are not making as much progress as they could. Generally, lower-ability pupils are well supported by skilled teaching assistants and make progress similar to most other pupils.
- The quality of marking is inconsistent. Some pupils felt that their work was regularly marked and that they are given good guidance on how to improve their work. Evidence shows that, although this is the case for some pupils, others are not given clear feedback and are therefore not sure about how to improve their work. Pupils are not always given the opportunity to respond to teachers' feedback.
- Teaching in the Reception class is good. For example, children worked on a written piece

describing a magic daffodil. They were able to write independently and staff gave good-quality support to help them extend their writing. Movement between activities enabled children to freely choose their own learning activities, and in the newly refurbished outdoor area, one child drew a diagram of a daffodil, correctly labelling the stem, petals and bulb, and could identify the parts on a living plant.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

- Pupils talk of a massive change in the way they are treated in school since the arrival of the new headteachers. As a result, they have similarly changed their attitudes and now engage well with their learning and work positively in class. Staff, and parents and carers, also say the changes have been dramatic. Relationships between pupils and staff are now very good.
- Pupils now say they are well looked after and cared for in school. Incidents of bullying and unkindness are now very rare, though pupils still say 'fall outs' do occur but staff are on hand to help sort problems. Systems to manage behaviour are well known to staff and pupils. These are based on rewarding good behaviour and working with pupils to recognise when they may have made poor choices.
- Pupils say they feel safe and are given good guidance on personal safety and safe use of the internet.
- Attendance at school is improving and is now above average.
- The school works closely with outside agencies to secure the support that vulnerable pupils and their families may need to ensure they are to be successful while in school.
- The pupils say that there are a limited number of clubs and activities to take part in but that this is improving. One after-school activity that is very well attended is the homework club. The demand for places is such that the school has had to open a second session on a different evening.
- All pupils, from the Reception class to Year 6, are polite and welcoming to visitors. They are a credit to the school.

### **The leadership and management** require improvement

- Over time, the school's leadership has not had enough impact in improving the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. The current interim leadership team has been very successful in changing the culture and attitudes within the school, and this is especially noteworthy considering the short timescale within which the changes have taken place. However, the school's new systems are not yet fully established.
- The current senior leaders recognise the need to develop leaders in charge of subjects and are supporting them as they take on responsibilities within the school. However, their efforts are only just beginning to have an impact on pupil outcomes.
- New systems to monitor pupils' progress have been brought in and these are helping leaders to track outcomes for pupils more effectively. One of the interim headteachers is soon taking over the role on a full-time basis and so the school has good capacity to move forward and improve further.
- The monitoring of the quality of teaching is rigorous and staff development has been targeted both at improving the practice of individual teachers and raising the standards generally across the school. Within the teaching team, there are staff who are taking a role in sharing and demonstrating good practice as part of a well-planned programme of staff development. With an increase in the accountability and responsibility that teachers have for the outcomes of pupils, there is a much sharper link in performance management of the quality of teaching to salary progression.
- The school leadership team and the governing body have benefited from targeted support from the local authority.

- Until recently, there have been few opportunities for enriching the curriculum with visits to places of interest or by having visitors coming into school. The school recognises the need to further develop and extend such activities that enrich learning both in the classroom and through wider use of places of interest and, consequently, make learning more exciting. The school is beginning to address this, for example with a whole-school trip to the National Gallery and the sites of London, and with friends of the school teaching lace-making to pupils studying the Tudors. Through such activities, the school is looking to increase links between subjects to develop a more creative and engaging approach to pupils' learning.
- The school is working to build the self-esteem of pupils and has had some initial success with pupils taking part in and winning their first inter-school tournament in netball. Efforts are made to develop and promote the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through periods of spiritual reflection, and in assemblies and at the end of the day.
- Promoting equality of opportunity is important to the school. The school now carefully tracks the progress of the pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium grant. The school has employed an intervention teacher to deliver small group and one-to-one sessions, and to review how effective the allocation of resources is in securing better outcomes for these pupils.
- The school has worked to address the points raised by the last inspection and recent improvements in the quality of teaching and learning are beginning to have an impact on pupils' progress. Parents and carers, staff and, most importantly, pupils say that the school has changed enormously in such a short space of time.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body was re-formed in September 2012 and, despite a lack of experience from some members, it has been very effective in monitoring the rapid improvements in the school. The governing body has a good understanding of the strengths of the school and the areas to develop through careful analysis and evaluation of pupils' progress data. Some of the governors can draw on their skills from previous roles in either education or finance and have been able to support newer governors as they develop in their roles. They have accessed training from the local authority and are becoming a cohesive team able to support the school and, at the same time, monitor and challenge the interim headteachers in terms of pupil outcomes. One area of focus has been the progress of specific groups, such as those in receipt of the pupil premium grant. The governing body has a good understanding of the performance management systems and the linkage of teacher performance to salary progression. With the expertise in the governing body, they are able to closely review the financial position of the school. The governors monitor the safeguarding arrangements and procedures, and ensure they meet statutory requirements.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	126259
<b>Local authority</b>	Wiltshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	402388

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	98
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Gabrielle Watts
<b>Headteacher</b>	Michael Park and Steve Riley
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	27–28 January 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01985 212704
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