

Prince Rock Primary School

Embankment Road, Plymouth, PL4 9JF

Inspection dates 9–10 May 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Pupils' achievement is outstanding. Children enter the school with skills and understanding well below those expected for their age and make excellent progress, so that by the end of Key Stage 2, they reach standards that are above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Children get very effective help in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are given things to do that interest and excite them. They make a flying start to their life in school.
- The quality of teaching across the school is outstanding. Teachers have very high expectations of their pupils and are skilled in using questioning to check and extend pupils' understanding. Learning is stimulating and fun.
- The individual learning and pastoral needs of pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable are met extremely well. The very high quality of care shown to the pupils and their families is a real strength of the school.
- All groups of pupils achieve exceptionally well because of the school's inclusive nature and the excellent support programmes for those who need extra help. Teaching assistants and the pastoral team make a very significant contribution to this aspect of school life.
- The partnership between the inspirational headteacher, the staff, members of the governing body and the pupils has created an exceptionally attractive and stimulating environment where all pupils can succeed. This is accompanied by a relentless pursuit of excellence in all aspects of the school's work.
- Teamwork and collaboration are essential elements of the school's approach and this is reflected in the pupils' excellent attitudes to learning. Their determination to be 'good learners' is very impressive and their behaviour is outstanding.
- They take great pride in their school. As one Year 6 pupil said, 'There is nothing to improve, it is just perfect; brilliant teachers, brilliant lessons and brilliant pupils!'

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 19 lessons, including three with senior members of staff.
- Meetings were held with two groups of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body, a representative of the local authority and a range of staff, including senior and middle leaders, as well as those with specific responsibility for the Early Years Foundation Stage and special educational needs.
- Inspectors heard pupils read, observed morning playtime and lunch breaks, made a visit to the breakfast club and attended an assembly.
- Pupils' work was scrutinised, including the 'learning journey' records of the youngest children. Displays around the school were also examined.
- Note was taken of the 17 responses made to the online questionnaire and the response to the school's own survey of parents' views . An inspector met some parents and carers informally at the start of each day. The views of 23 staff, as expressed in the staff questionnaire, were also considered.
- A range of documents were looked at, including the school's information on pupils' progress, improvement planning, the school's self-evaluation, information on the quality of teaching and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Anne Wesley, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Nick Ridiough

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Prince Rock is an average-sized primary school which is increasing in size.
- Far more pupils join and leave the school at times other than Reception and Year 6 than is usually found.
- It has nine classes, including two Reception classes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and supported by the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children who are looked after and children from service families) is twice as high as the national average.
- The proportions of pupils from ethnic minority groups or who speak English as an additional language is lower than found nationally.
- There are fewer disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported at school action than the national average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school is a National Support School and Teaching School and gives support to other schools in the city.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that pupils are given time to respond to, and act upon, the advice they are given by the teachers when they mark their books.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Most children enter Reception with skills and understanding well below age-related expectations. As a result of the exciting environment and excellent teaching, all children make rapid progress and move into Key Stage 1 very well equipped for the next stage in their learning.
- This very positive start is continued by extremely skilled teachers and assistants in Years 1 and 2, and pupils' basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics are developed very well. The school places an emphasis on pupils' personal development and their attitudes to learning so that they are able to achieve exceptionally well as they move through the school. Pupils throughout the school make excellent progress in reading, but strong emphasis on early reading is accelerating progress even more in Key Stage 1.
- For the last three years, the rate of progress the pupils make in Key Stage 2 has been high and pupils reach above-average standards in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6. Furthermore, the proportion achieving above the expected rate of progress is significantly higher than that seen nationally. The school predicts the current Year 6 will do as well and the work seen in their books confirms that they are making excellent progress.
- The school's accurate tracking system ensures extra support is targeted promptly so that all groups of pupils, particularly disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, make equally outstanding progress.
- Pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding also achieve exceptionally well, in line with other pupils in the school. Pupils make better progress than their peers nationally in both English and mathematics as a result of careful consideration of their needs and individualised support. One-to-one teaching and small-group work by skilled teaching assistants ensure that all the pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable do as well as their peers.
- Attainment in writing is strong because of the many opportunities to use writing skills in a wide range of subjects. Many examples of this could be seen in the excellent displays around the school, particularly good biographies of some famous Europeans which were written as part of the last term's topic.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics is outstanding. They delight in using their very strong basic skills in all sorts of 'real-life' contexts and to solve problems. For example, measuring themselves and their friends when the usual ruler would not do the job, they improvised well and worked together to solve the problem by using string and strips of paper.
- Pupils joining the school at other times than the beginning of Reception, some of whom know little English when they arrive, are quickly supported to develop confidence and to acquire good communication skills. As a result, they make excellent progress and catch up with other pupils.
- The outstanding achievement is made possible because of the emphasis the school places on teaching pupils how to learn, for example, skills of independence, resilience and perseverance. A group of Year 4 children struggled to remove some clichés from a piece of writing; they worked extremely well together and persevered until each one was sure it was as good as it could be. The pupils' attitudes to learning are superb.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- At all stages in the school, the large majority of teaching is outstanding, and this is ensuring that the pupils are able to make excellent progress. Teachers have extremely high expectations for all pupils, who respond very positively to the challenge.
- Rigorous assessment systems, used consistently and shared by all teachers, ensure that lessons are planned to meet the needs of different groups. As a result, all pupils can access their learning quickly. Extra levels of challenge are added as learning progresses because teachers are good at assessing when pupils are ready to move forward. For example, in a Year 6 writing lesson, the level of work produced was so high that the teacher moved the learning on quickly

by prompting the pupils to use 'personification' in their descriptions.

- In the Reception classes, teaching is often inspirational and children learn in an exceptional environment which is rich in opportunities for the development of language and communication skills. The dinosaur theme leading onto work on volcanoes inspired the children to create an archaeological museum where they were hunting for word bones in the sand. The water area was turned into a lava flow area and inspectors were warned that the 'pink gunge could burn your feet'. Reading and writing about dinosaurs was evident everywhere, as was a clear enjoyment in learning.
- Throughout the school, there is a strong emphasis on the development of pupils' reading skills, from very well-planned work on early reading skills in Reception, Year 1 and 2 to the more advanced skills pupils need to achieve the higher levels at the end of Year 6. Consequently, the progress all pupils make in reading is exceptionally strong.
- Writing skills are taught very well. Pupils are always given a clear explanation of how to be successful in completing the written tasks and then they are continually asked to consider how their writing could be improved. Evaluating and editing their work is common practice. Pupils' books and wall displays are full of well-written, interesting pieces of work. The pupils take pride in being effective writers. As one Year 6 boy said, 'I want it to be the best description ever.'
- Teachers are extremely skilled in using a range of questioning to probe pupils' understanding and develop their knowledge. This was observed in a Year 1 lesson where the teacher steadily built up the pupils' understanding of the relationship between counting in fives, twos and tens and working on money problems, using quick-fire questioning to constantly check on their progress.
- Teachers regularly create exciting opportunities for pupils to practise their basic skills. For example, 'Mr Pizza Man' visited and Year 2 worked on best value for the pizza toppings, Year 5 measured angles of the various slices and Year 6 worked on percentages from the discounts he was offering. The progress seen in this work was exceptional.
- Additional adults in the classroom provide excellent support to all pupils. However, they are particularly effective when they work with individuals or groups of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. Their skilled and highly effective approach, led by the specialist teacher, helps these pupils to quickly catch up with their peers.
- High-quality marking provides a careful balance between praise and suggesting how pupils could improve their work, although sometimes there are not enough opportunities for pupils to respond to these comments and take action on the advice given.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- There is an exceptionally welcoming atmosphere throughout the school. Pupils are always very friendly and extremely polite. They get on very well with each other and with adults. They enjoy school and are keen to learn. They are expected to behave extremely well, and they do.
- Teachers manage pupils' behaviour extremely well. They create a very effective climate for learning. Pupils respond extremely positively to the high expectations of them in lessons. Their behaviour and attitudes make a particularly powerful contribution to their own learning. The school is effective in promoting equality of opportunity, fostering good relations and ensuring there is no discrimination.
- Children in Reception learn the rules of good behaviour quickly. They show maturity as they concentrate and persevere with activities, choose their own resources and make decisions together about their own learning; for example, an earnest discussion took place about the most suitable material for an aerial in a dinosaur's house which was being constructed.
- Pupils have a very good understanding of the different forms bullying can take. They say it is extremely rare, but that any problems 'are very quickly sorted out'. Pupils have a very thorough understanding of how to stay safe, including internet safety.
- The pupils would know how to act if something seemed dangerous and they are secure in the

knowledge that help is on hand should they need it. They feel very safe. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school's ability to keep their children safe and to deal with any problems quickly.

- Pupils enjoy taking responsibility and contributing to the life of the school. The 'Role Model' position for Year 6 pupils is highly prized and their influence respected by the younger pupils. They say their opinions matter and staff listen to what they think. This is demonstrated in their involvement in staff selection and in the decisions concerning the charities the school supports.
- Attendance has continued to improve through a very wide range of strategies. The 'walking buses', collecting children in the immediate area of school, have been particularly successful. The pupils like the rewards for full attendance, but more importantly, they want to come to school as they know 'every lesson counts'.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher and leaders at all levels, including the governors, have a fierce ambition for continuing improvement, and so consistently set high expectations for the pupils' achievement and the quality of the teaching. There is a relentless pursuit for excellence and consequently, an outstanding capacity for continuing improvement.
- The school knows its strengths and points for development extremely well through the very systematic and rigorous checking of pupils' progress and the quality of the teaching by the school leaders. This information is shared fully with the governors. The Chair of the Governing Body regularly attends senior leadership meetings when she can see the process of checking for herself.
- Very effective performance management provides support, constructive criticism and appropriate training for the teachers' work in the classroom. Actions to bring about improvement are always followed through to see if they are successful. As a result, the very large majority of teaching is now outstanding. The teachers are aware of the relationship between performance management, promotion and salaries.
- The curriculum's breadth and richness helps to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness outstandingly well. Their 'Agony Aunt' column showed a very sensitive response to modern dilemmas that they might encounter, for example 'My brother is stealing from our local shop. What shall I do?'
- Visitors to school, a wide variety of trips, many after-school activities and the chance of performing to real audiences, as well as links with schools in China and New York, all help to give the pupils a wider view of the world and to raise their aspirations.
- The school provides very high-quality care for its more disadvantaged pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable, demonstrating very effective links with parents and carers, and ensuring that all pupils can benefit from the learning experiences that the school provides. This is strengthened by the close links the school has with many outside support agencies.
- The school works in close collaboration with the local authority. This has supported the school to become a 'National Support School' and a 'National Teaching School'. These significant collaborations place heavy demands on the school but the school leaders say that these successfully maintain and develop the school's outstanding performance.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Members of the governing body are very well aware of the school's strengths and remain ambitious for the school's continued improvement. They have a very clear understanding of data on how well all groups of pupils are achieving and of the quality of teaching. They make sure the pupil premium is well spent and one governor has specific responsibility for checking and reporting back that those pupils known to be eligible for the funding are benefiting fully from its use. The governors are fully supportive of the school, but also

consistently challenge its performance. They ensure performance management is in place and play an extremely effective role in making staff appointments and promoting staff within the school. Governors take part in many training courses to ensure they are fully up to date with all their areas of responsibility. The governors ensure that their statutory obligations are fully met including safeguarding.

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

Unique reference number	113344
Local authority	Plymouth
Inspection number	411708

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	260
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Carol Bull
Headteacher	Simon Spry
Date of previous school inspection	17–18 March 2010
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