

# Princethorpe Junior School

Princethorpe Road, Weoley Castle, Birmingham, B29 5QB

**Inspection dates** 13–14 June 2013

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Pupils achieve well, and an above-average proportion of pupils reach the nationally expected standard in reading and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Reading standards are particularly strong. Pupils enjoy reading and value the wide range of books in school.
- Pupils make good progress in every year group because teaching is consistently good.
- Teachers plan activities that are well matched to pupils' needs.
- Teachers phrase their questions skilfully to ensure pupils need to think hard and learning is extended.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make rapid progress because they are provided with well-planned support.
- Pupils feel safe and behave well. They are very proud of their school and are keen to express their views.
- Leadership and management are good. Checks on teaching are robust and lead to support and training focused on improving achievement.
- The governing body offers just the right amount of challenge and support.
- The school spends additional funding wisely so that pupils for whom it is intended do as well as the others.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Progress in writing is not as rapid as that in reading and mathematics.
- Pupils have too few opportunities to write at length in any subject.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 16 lessons, four of which were observed jointly with the headteacher or the assistant headteacher.
- The inspectors were unable to see any mathematics teaching due to the whole school being on an educational visit for part of the inspection, and the nature of the timetable.
- Meetings were held with pupils, representatives of the governing body and the local authority, and staff, including senior and subject leaders.
- There were insufficient responses to the online Parent View for an analysis to be triggered. Inspectors spoke with parents and carers informally and took note of letters sent into the school. A recent parent survey carried out by the school was also taken into account.
- Inspectors observed the work of the school. They looked at a range of documentation, including information about pupils' progress. They also looked at the school's behaviour and anti-bullying policies, and the child protection and safeguarding procedures.

## Inspection team

Jeremy Bird, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Michael Onyon

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Princethorpe Junior is smaller than the average-sized school of its type.
- An above-average proportion of the pupils are eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average, including pupils supported at school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- A below-average proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- 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?

- Accelerate pupils' progress in writing by:
  - making more frequent reviews of pupils' progress and adjusting individual pupils' targets as a result
  - ensuring that teachers use the information they have about what pupils already know to guide them on what they need to do to improve their writing
  - providing pupils with more opportunities and time to write independently
  - ensure that writing skills are practised and developed in other subjects
  - provide pupils with learning objectives for writing in other subjects and check that they are met.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

**is good**

- From their varied starting points, which are sometimes below average, pupils make good progress and achieve well. Standards by the time they leave at the end of Year 6, are usually above average, especially in reading and mathematics, in that an above-average proportion of pupils attain the nationally expected level.
- Progress in mathematics is good. Pupils' work is neatly presented and there are regular opportunities for pupils to solve mathematical problems.
- Pupils enjoy learning about the sounds that letters make (phonics), and this helps them develop good reading skills. As a result, they enjoy the wide range of reading books available to them. They read widely and often.
- The school uses its pupil premium funding very effectively. School leaders have identified pupils in need of further support in their learning. They have then funded specific strategies, such as the 'Triple A' scheme (which encourages pupils to both know their targets and how to achieve them) and the engagement with an integrated family support worker.
- In 2012, the attainment of pupils for whom the school receives additional funding was about six months behind the others, in English and mathematics. School data shows that this group of pupils has made good or better progress in recent years, and are catching up quickly.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is at least as good as that of other pupils because the school tracks the progress of these pupils rigorously to ensure they do not fall behind.
- Standards in writing dipped to broadly average in 2012 because progress had been inconsistent. Pupils have responded to the school's work to improve this so that progress in writing is now back to good, although standards are still not quite as high as in the other subjects.

### The quality of teaching

**is good**

- Teaching is good across the school. Teachers plan and teach lessons which motivate pupils.
- Reading is taught well. Teachers work effectively with mixed-ability groups, providing effective support when required. An example of effective teaching allowed pupils to read for a long period of time, skilfully questioning pupils' understanding.
- In mathematics, teachers provide a good balance between calculation and problem-solving questions. Teachers write comments in pupils' books which encourage even better work in subsequent lessons.
- Teachers and other adults create a safe and motivating environment in classrooms. Relationships are warm and friendly so that pupils develop the confidence to learn. The regular opportunities for pupils to work in pairs and in groups help develop pupils' confidence and self-esteem and promotes their social development.
- Teachers and other adults in the classroom respond well to pupils' individual needs. They are

skilled in knowing when to support and when to leave pupils to be more independent in their learning.

- Teachers use questions skilfully to tease out pupil opinions and personal ideas. Consequently, pupils apply these in their writing. This resulted in pupils being keen to write and be proud of their work.
- Teachers ensure that pupils know their targets for improvement and are happy to talk about these. The 'Triple A' development introduced by leaders has been well received by pupils and they are encouraged to use this to explain how they are progressing in their learning.
- Where teaching of writing is best, pupils are encouraged to think about how to make their writing even better and what resources would support them. Teachers have high expectations of what the pupils can achieve and give enough time for the pupils to concentrate on their writing for a lengthy period, resulting in rapid progress. This practice is not yet consistent through the school.
- Sometimes, teachers do not use the information they have about what pupils already know to help pupils do better in their writing. When this is the case, progress slows. Sometimes, the teacher is over-directive, so that pupils do not have enough time or opportunity to write independently.
- Whilst marking in literacy books is effective and helps pupils to improve their work, this good practice is not applied to writing in other books. This means that pupils are not able to make as much progress in writing from their work in other subjects.
- While learning objectives for writing are good, they are not used in other subjects which, together with the lack of opportunities to write at length in other subjects, restricts pupils' progress in writing.

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

- Pupils behave well in class and around the school. They show caring attitudes towards each other and are respectful and considerate.
- Pupils can explain what bullying means and report that it is 'not an issue' at the school. They learn about the different forms of bullying they might meet and what to do about it.
- Pupils say they feel safe, with parents and staff also expressing similar views. They understand how to stay safe; for example, how to use the internet appropriately.
- Staff manage behaviour well and this is why there are few incidents.
- Pupils display highly positive attitudes to learning. They listen well in class and co-operate amiably with each other. They are eager to pose and answer questions, although sometimes, they are unwilling to argue their point of view.
- Only when the occasional lesson is not motivating does attention wander.
- Attendance is below average. Although, most pupils attend school regularly but a few do not. The school is doing all it can to engage with parents and work with outside agencies to ensure

improvement for these pupils.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- Leaders and managers have worked relentlessly to ensure that the school consolidates and improves on its present quality so that all aspects are good.
- The headteacher understands the needs of the local community and has established a school environment which parents, children and staff welcome and value.
- The school's self-evaluation is accurate, including its evaluation of the quality of teaching. Checks on teachers' performance are robust. School leaders observe lessons and give feedback to teachers which they find useful in improving their practice. Leaders use pupil progress data to inform their discussions with staff and to set teachers specific targets for improvement.
- Progress made by pupils is carefully tracked but the information from this tracking is not always used rigorously to focus support for pupils who are in danger of falling behind or in setting precise targets.
- The well-thought-out improvement plan is regularly referred to and achievements noted. School leaders are not afraid to make changes if they do not feel their work is having the desired effect.
- The way subjects are planned and taught give pupils many enjoyable learning experiences that contribute greatly to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school has identified as an area for further development the need for pupils to experience a broader range of cultures.
- The school works hard to engage with its parents and is largely successful. It is making good progress in engaging with the few families whose children fail to attend regularly.
- The local authority provides appropriate light-touch support for this good school.
- Safeguarding procedures meet requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body provides effective support for the school. Governors have a good understanding of the work of the school and understand data showing how the school compares with others.
  - Governors ensure that school leaders are held to account for their work. They keep in touch with the quality of teaching, and teachers' performance, and how this relates to salaries, through detailed reports from the headteacher.
  - The governing body is actively involved in determining how funding, such as pupil premium, is used. It then checks to see it has the desired impact on the achievement of eligible pupils.

## 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>	103244
<b>Local authority</b>	Birmingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	411918

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	209
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Christine Hopkins
<b>Headteacher</b>	Georgina Arnold
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	4 March 2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	0121 475 1083
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