

# Princethorpe Junior School

Princethorpe Road, Weoley Castle, Birmingham, West Midlands B29 5QB

Inspection dates 7–8 November 2017

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Inadequate
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Inadequate
Outcomes for pupils	Inadequate
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

# Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an inadequate school

- The poor quality of teaching, learning and assessment over time has led to inadequate progress and outcomes for pupils.
- Leaders and governors have not taken sufficient action to bring about improvements to the school quickly enough. There has been little focus on areas of weakness.
- Governors have been too accepting of information given to them. They have not challenged leaders or held them to account.
- The curriculum does not meet current national curriculum requirements. Pupils are not being taught a full range of subjects.
- Leaders at all levels have not been given sufficient training, time and support to enable them to carry out their roles effectively.
- The use of additional funding has had no impact on improving the outcomes for disadvantaged pupils or pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities.
- The school has the following strengths
- The newly appointed headteacher has an accurate understanding of the improvements which need to take place and is beginning to address them. Staff and parents express confidence in his ability to bring about the necessary improvements.

- Poor assessment arrangements have resulted in leaders being unable to track pupils' progress from their starting points. As a result, support is not targeted where it is needed.
- Teachers' subject knowledge and practice in the teaching of mathematics are weak. Pupils' and teachers' misconceptions about mathematics are reinforced.
- Learning activities are not matched well enough to pupils' abilities across all curriculum subjects. Poor-quality work is accepted too readily by teachers.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities do not receive the support they need.
- Incidents of racist and homophobic bullying occur regularly and are not tackled effectively.
- Some pupils' low-level disruptive behaviour spoils the learning of others.
- Pupils are not resilient learners; they are too quick to give up if they find the work difficult.
- Pupils said that they feel safe at this school despite the incidents of bullying. Pupils said that staff care about them and they can talk to an adult if they have any worries.



# Full report

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

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

- Take urgent action to increase the capacity of leaders to secure improvement in all areas by ensuring that:
  - leaders refine their action plan to make sure that it is focused sharply on the key areas for improvement, with a rapid pace of change
  - the expected outcomes are precise and measurable, and their impact is evaluated
  - senior and middle leaders receive further training and support to enable them to support the headteacher in bringing about whole-school improvements
  - the school's curriculum is broad and balanced, meets statutory requirements and supports pupils' learning and development
  - leaders gather and monitor assessment information systematically, ensuring its accuracy, and use the information to inform future actions and interventions.
- Improve the effectiveness of governors by ensuring that:
  - they have a full complement of governors, possessing the necessary skills and capacity to bring about improvements to the school
  - governors have an accurate picture of the school's strengths, weaknesses and the subsequent actions needed to bring about improvements, so that they can hold leaders to account for these actions
  - governors monitor the impact of the use of additional funding, including pupil
    premium and funding for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, and hold leaders
    to account for its use, making sure that it has a positive impact on pupils' progress
    and attainment
  - arrangements for managing teachers' performance are in place and carried out in a timely way so that the quality of education for pupils improves
  - the school's website meets the requirements for the publication of statutory information
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that pupils' attainment and progress are improved by ensuring that:
  - teachers use assessment information effectively to make sure that work is matched to pupils' abilities
  - teachers' subject knowledge and practice in mathematics are effective across all year groups
  - the teaching of mathematics develops pupils' fluency and problem-solving and



- reasoning skills
- pupils are given regular access to appropriate resources to develop and embed their mathematical understanding.
- Improve the provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities by ensuring that:
  - individual needs are identified accurately so that support, provided by school and external partners, is planned, targeted and delivered effectively to meet those needs
  - all staff receive training on how to support pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and are deployed effectively
  - support for these pupils is monitored and evaluated in a systematic way.
- Improve pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning by ensuring that:
  - all staff take urgent action to reduce incidents of all types of bullying in the school, and support pupils more effectively to develop a greater understanding and tolerance of different faiths, cultures, beliefs and lifestyles
  - leaders track behaviours in a coordinated way so that they can identify trends in low-level behaviours and intervene in a timely way
  - low-level disruption is addressed swiftly, through consistent use of the school's new behaviour policy
  - lessons are better pitched to pupils' abilities so that pupils are motivated and engaged in their learning, leading to better attendance and fewer exclusions
  - pupils develop skills to become more confident and resilient learners.

An external review of governance should be undertaken to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the school's use of pupil premium funding should be undertaken to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.



# **Inspection judgements**

### **Effectiveness of leadership and management**

**Inadequate** 

- Over the last two years, standards have declined at the school. In the past, leaders and governors have not taken effective action in a timely way to halt this decline. They have worked in an insular way, resisting external monitoring and support. Only when the previous headteacher left did the governing body seek external support from the local authority. While steps have been taken to bring about improvement, the impact of these actions has been limited.
- This period of transition in leadership has led to instability in the school. While the local authority commissioned external support for the school, some of this support was not matched well enough to the needs of the school. As a result, parents, staff and pupils lost trust in the school's leaders. Standards in pupil behaviour declined, and pupil exclusions were high. A number of new initiatives were introduced, but these have had little impact on the quality of education provided for pupils.
- The new headteacher, who began working at the school in September 2017, recognises that there is much to do to bring about whole-school improvement. He has an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. However, there is currently limited capacity for improvement, as governors and other leaders are not yet focused fully on the extent of the work that needs to be done.
- The new headteacher has begun to address the significant areas of concern. Staff, pupils and parents are positive about the recent changes. Staff are confident that the new headteacher will address the weaknesses in the school and are supportive of his actions. Inspectors were told on several occasions that the new headteacher is, 'like a breath of fresh air'. However, it is far too early to see any significant impact of the actions the new headteacher has taken.
- Other leaders in the school have not previously received effective leadership training, support or the time to enable them to carry out their roles well. They currently lack capacity to bring about the rapid improvements needed. However, they feel better supported by the new headteacher.
- Leaders and governors have not ensured that the revised national curriculum has been implemented effectively. Currently, pupils do not receive their full curriculum entitlement in subjects other than English and mathematics. The headteacher has begun taking steps to address this. A new curriculum model is being trialled in one year group, and there are plans to introduce this across the school in January 2018.
- The curriculum does not support pupils well enough to develop their understanding of fundamental British values, tolerance and equality, reflected in the number of bullying incidents in the school.
- Weak leadership has resulted in poor provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. Leaders recognise that this group of pupils are not receiving the support they need but are not acting quickly enough to address this. This is because leaders have not been given sufficient time or training to carry out their roles effectively to ensure that this support is put in place. Until recently, leaders' time has been taken with managing pupils' behaviour.



- The current provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is poor and is not monitored by leaders. Leaders do not have any strategic oversight of this area. The little support that pupils currently receive is having very limited impact, and pupils are not making any progress.
- Not all pupils have individual plans to support their learning. Plans which are in place are not sufficiently focused on the additional help that pupils need. Plans are not monitored and evaluated to enable the impact on pupils' learning and outcomes to be seen
- Funding for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is not used well. The provision for pupils who have additional speech and language difficulties is poor. As a result, pupils' communication needs have not been assessed quickly enough, and support has not been put in place.
- Leaders do not monitor the work of external agencies to see whether it is having any impact on pupils' progress.
- Teaching assistants are skilled, but are not being used well enough for pupils who need additional help and support.
- The use of the recently introduced assessment system for tracking pupils' progress and attainment is not yet embedded. Leaders are able to identify whole-school trends in reading, writing and mathematics, but are not yet able to analyse the progress of groups of pupils.
- Leaders have ensured that plans are in place to use this year's physical education and sports premium funding appropriately. Previous use of this funding has not been evaluated to see whether it has had an impact on outcomes for pupils.
- Newly qualified teachers may not be appointed.

#### Governance of the school

- The governing body has not held leaders to account for the poor teaching, slow progress and poor outcomes for pupils. While it is clear that governors are both supportive of and committed to the school, they have not taken the necessary actions needed to bring about school improvement. They have been slow to recognise that they are ultimately responsible for the standards in the school.
- Membership of the governing body is incomplete. There are no parent representatives on the governing body, and until recently a governor held a parent governor role when they were not eligible to do this.
- In the past, governors have been too accepting of information they have been given by leaders. As a result, they have not challenged leaders rigorously or held them to account for the poor standards and performance of pupils.
- Governor minutes show that, more recently, governors are beginning to challenge leaders about all aspects of the school's performance. However, they are not yet tenacious enough in following up information requests when they are not received in a timely way.
- Governors have not ensured that systems for managing the performance of teachers



have been followed. Teachers' performance for the last academic year has not been reviewed.

- Governors have failed to check that leaders are using pupil premium funding, funding for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, and the primary physical education and sports funding effectively.
- Governors have a good understanding of their safeguarding responsibilities. They have attended relevant training and understand the risks in the local area.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have ensured that all staff receive regular training and updates on all aspects of safeguarding. The designated safeguarding lead attends regular safeguarding briefings in the local authority and shares this information with staff.
- Staff understand the actions they need to take if they have any concerns about pupils. Staff have received additional training on other aspects of safeguarding, including female genital mutilation, child sexual exploitation and the 'Prevent' duty.
- A number of leaders and governors have received training in safer recruitment. They make sure that appropriate checks are carried out on new members of staff before they begin working at the school.
- Leaders are aware of the risks in the local area and respond in a timely way when concerns are raised. Partnerships with external agencies are effective in making sure that pupils feel safe and receive extra support when needed.
- Despite the bullying incidents which take place, pupils said that they feel safe and are not at risk of harm.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Inadequate** 

- The lack of effective action to address weaknesses in the quality of teaching and learning over time, along with long periods of staff absence, has had a negative impact on pupils' progress and outcomes. Weak teaching has resulted in all groups of pupils making inadequate progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Current standards in teaching across all the year groups remain too variable. While there are some pockets of strong teaching, this is not yet consistent across all year groups and in all subjects. As a result, pupils are not reaching the expected standards for their age in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teachers are not yet making sure that all pupils are provided with work that is well-matched to their abilities. In some lessons, and particularly in subjects other than English and mathematics, pupils complete the same activity. Leaders recognised the variation in expectations of writing in English, compared with other subjects.
- When work is not matched well enough to pupils' abilities, low-level disruption occurs. Inspectors saw pupils becoming frustrated when the work was too difficult. At the



same time, other pupils had completed their work and were not given any additional challenge. As a result, they lost focus and started chatting and doodling on learning materials.

- Inspectors saw evidence of low expectations of pupils, both in lessons and in pupils' work. In a Year 5 mathematics lesson, pupils were presented with three shapes and asked to identify the odd one out. In pupils' science work, pupils did not see activities through to their conclusion so it was not clear what pupils had learned.
- The way in which teachers use questions to develop pupils' learning is variable. Far too frequently, teachers use questions that do not enable or encourage pupils to deepen their thinking.
- Teachers are not always clear about their expectations for learning, or do not support pupils well enough. In one lesson, pupils were told to set out their column addition calculations correctly, but the teacher did not model what was required. In another lesson, pupils were not provided with word banks to improve their writing, and the teacher did not share words they could have used until the end of the lesson.
- In mathematics, teachers' subject knowledge is weak, which leads to poor teaching. The teaching of mathematics relies too heavily on following instructions, and pupils' work reflects this approach. Pupils are not becoming fluent mathematicians.
- Teachers do not use correct mathematical vocabulary consistently. Calculation strategies are not used appropriately. For example, work in books showed that when adding numbers in mathematics, pupils were confused by the teacher's incorrect and confusing methods. Pupils are not encouraged to think of the most efficient way to complete a calculation.
- Misconceptions are not addressed quickly enough by teachers, and sometimes teachers are reinforcing pupils' mistakes. Inspectors saw groups of pupils working on column subtraction, where they were reminded by the teacher: 'You can't take 8 from 4.' This will only serve to confuse pupils when they work with negative numbers.
- Pupils have very few opportunities to use a range of suitable resources to support the development of their mathematical understanding. For example, teachers do not plan effective opportunities for pupils to use objects to aid their understanding of calculations. Work in pupils' books also showed teachers demonstrating an incorrect and confusing use of a number line.
- Teachers do not ensure that pupils consistently take pride in their work. Work is better presented in Year 6, where expectations are higher. In some books, work is often incomplete. Grammar and spelling expectations in English are not consistently applied in other subjects. Incorrect spellings of subject-specific vocabulary are not corrected, or are reinforced.
- The teaching of reading does not enable pupils to achieve the necessary standards expected for their age. The year 2017 saw a further drop in the standards attained by pupils in reading. Leaders have begun to take action to address this, by introducing guided reading sessions. Pupils said that they enjoy the opportunity to read on a daily basis. Currently, all pupils share the same text regardless of their reading ability. As a result, the most able pupils are not challenged sufficiently to develop their reading skills.



- Inspectors listened to a group of pupils read. Some pupils are able to read fluently, but others require additional help to develop their reading skills. While pupils are encouraged to take their reading books home, reading diaries are not monitored by school staff. As a result, some pupils have been reading the same book for over a month, and have not read at home.
- Teachers do not use assessment information well enough to inform their planning and make sure that they modify their teaching according to gaps in pupils' learning. Pupils are not moved on quickly enough in their learning. Teachers praise pupils' efforts, but do not identify pupils' next steps for learning.
- Teachers have few opportunities to moderate work, both within school and with other schools. As a result, they are not able to make sure that their assessments of pupils' work are accurate.
- Pupils' writing in Year 6 is strong. Their handwriting is of a good standard and their work is well presented. Work in books shows that pupils have regular opportunities to write at length, and many pupils are now working at the expected standard for writing.
- Pupils to whom inspectors spoke said that they enjoy the extra-curricular sporting activities offered to them. Pupils said that they would like a wider range of non-sporting-based activities from which to choose, and they suggested drama and cookery.
- Inspectors saw the good relationships that exist between staff and pupils in lessons and around the school. In some lessons, pupils' positive behaviour and work were rewarded consistently through the use of stickers and class 'dojos'.

# Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Inadequate** 

## Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate.
- Pupils to whom inspectors spoke were not clear about what bullying is or the different forms it can take. Incidents of racist and homophobic bullying occur regularly. When pupils were asked how a person with different beliefs or a different skin colour would be welcomed to the school, pupils told inspectors that they would be called names. Pupils do not feel that racist incidents are resolved effectively.
- Pupils do not yet have the skills to be resilient learners. They are quick to give up if work is too hard. They are not sufficiently confident to rise to greater challenges in their work and rely too much on teacher support.
- Pupils have few opportunities to engage in meaningful play activities at breaktime and they told inspectors this was the case. There are more opportunities to take part in activities at lunchtime and pupils value these clubs and games.
- Pupils told inspectors that they are safe in school. Parents and staff supported this view. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe on the internet and said that this is discussed regularly in lessons. External providers are used well to help children learn how to keep themselves safe, for example how to make safe choices and have healthy relationships. These messages are reinforced through the personal, social and health



education curriculum.

- Older pupils were able to talk about how they try to resolve their problems if they have argued with their friends. Pupils talked about how they had decided to knit together, so that they could sort things out and be friends again.
- Pupils are beginning to participate in the new school council activities. Inspectors saw pupils with a real enthusiasm for being involved in decision-making about their school.
- Pupils told inspectors that they are looked after at school and know that they can talk to a trusted adult.

#### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is inadequate.
- Pupils consistently expressed the view that behaviour is not good in the school and it disturbs their learning. Inspectors saw low-level disruption occurring regularly in lessons, which was not always addressed quickly enough by teachers. When work is not matched to pupils' abilities, or when teachers do not explain tasks clearly, pupils lose concentration and become distracted, or distract others. On some occasions, pupils are not given the right equipment for the activity, which leads to learning time being wasted.
- The recently reviewed behaviour policy is beginning to have a positive impact on behaviour in the school. However, staff expressed the view that this was not yet finetuned to the needs of the pupils, especially those who display more challenging behaviour.
- Leaders have reintroduced behaviour plans for pupils who need additional help to manage their behaviour. Pupils recognise that there have been some improvements in their peers' behaviour this term.
- Overall, attendance has been below the national average for the last two years. While there have been improvements this term, it remains below national figures. Attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities is lower than that of other pupils in the school. Leaders did not have information about last year's attendance for these groups of pupils. Pupils' attendance during the inspection was above the national average.
- While there has been a slight improvement this term, the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent remains well above the national average.
- Leaders do not yet analyse attendance information sufficiently to identify emerging patterns. Attendance records show that a number of pupils are regularly late for school, but leaders are not able to see whether this is linked to particular days of the week, classes or year groups.
- Leaders provided a small number of attendance case studies, showing how recent interventions have had a positive impact on improving individual attendance.
- There has been a high number of exclusions this year, particularly in the summer term. The headteacher is committed to reducing exclusions, and there have been very few this term.



## **Outcomes for pupils**

**Inadequate** 

- Pupils have not received an acceptable standard of education in this school. Many do not meet the standards expected at the end of key stage 2, and are ill prepared for the next phase of their education.
- In 2017, information shows that the rates of progress for reading and writing of pupils at the end of key stage 2 have declined further from those seen in 2016 and are in the bottom 10% of schools nationally. While progress in mathematics is slightly higher, it is still in the bottom 20% of all schools nationally.
- Progress of different groups of pupils varies; disadvantaged pupils make less progress than their non-disadvantaged peers, and boys' progress in reading and writing is poor.
- In 2017, attainment in reading, writing and mathematics remained below the national average, although improvements were made in pupils' attainment in writing and mathematics. This was not the case for reading; attainment has declined for all pupils in 2017 at the end of key stage 2.
- In reading, writing and mathematics, disadvantaged pupils do not achieve the same standards as their non-disadvantaged peers. There is no evidence to suggest that the use of pupil premium funding has made a difference to the outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.
- In 2017, the proportion of pupils who achieved greater depth in their learning at the end of key stage 2 increased from a very low baseline in 2016.
- In 2017, outcomes in science at the end of key stage 2 remained below national figures.
- In other year groups, too few pupils are reaching expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics and are not making the required progress.
- In the past, leaders have not used assessment information well enough to target additional support for pupils. The school now has a new system for tracking pupils' progress and attainment, but this is not used well enough to track the progress of different groups across all year groups. Leaders were unable to provide any information about the current progress of pupils since the end of the summer term.
- Leaders are not able to track the progress of pupils in other curriculum subjects. However, the lack of coverage of other subjects and the lower standards of work seen in books show that pupils are not making acceptable progress overall.



### School details

Unique reference number 103244

Local authority Birmingham

Inspection number 10043156

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

Type of school Junior

School category Maintained

Age range of pupils 7 to 11

Gender of pupils Mixed

Number of pupils on the school roll 240

Appropriate authority The governing body

Chair Christine Hopkins

Headteacher Gerrard Rothwell

Telephone number 01214 751083

Website www.princethorpe-jun.bham.sch.uk

Email address enquiry@princethorpe-jun.bham.sch.uk

Date of previous inspection

June 2013

#### Information about this school

- Princethorpe School is a two-form entry junior school.
- The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is much higher than the national average.
- The majority of pupils who attend the school are White British.
- The school has had three headteachers in the last year. The current headteacher took up his post in September 2017.
- The school has received intensive support from the Birmingham Education Partnership, Bournville Teaching School Alliance and Cherry Orchard School since February 2017.
- The school meets the current government floor standards.
- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about the curriculum, use of additional funding and governor information and duties on its website.



# Information about this inspection

- Inspectors carried out teaching and learning observations in all year groups. They were accompanied by senior leaders for the majority of these observations.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior leaders to discuss different aspects of the school's performance. Inspectors spoke to a group of staff and considered the 12 responses to the Ofsted online staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors spoke to a number of parents at the start of the school day. There were only five responses to Parent View, the Ofsted parent questionnaire, so these could not be taken in to account.
- Inspectors met with a group of pupils, and heard a group of pupils read. They looked at work in books and spoke to pupils about their learning and experience of school.
- The lead inspector met with three representatives from the governing body, including the chair of governors. She also met with a representative of the Birmingham Education Partnership, which has been commissioned by the local authority to support the school.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of school documents, including the school's selfevaluation, development plan, minutes of meetings of the governing body, information about pupil progress, and records of how staff performance is managed. Records of attendance, behaviour and safeguarding were scrutinised.

# **Inspection team**

Deb Jenkins, lead inspector

Benjamin Taylor

Ofsted Inspector



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