

Inspection of Princes Risborough Primary School

Wellington Avenue, Princes Risborough, Buckinghamshire HP27 9HY

Inspection dates: 22–23 October 2019

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Not previously inspected

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils feel valued at this school. They say that adults in the school care for them well and keep them safe. They know there is always an adult they can talk to if they feel worried or upset. Pupils are respectful and behave well.

Pupils enjoy many school trips, sports activities, competitions, workshops and clubs. These opportunities provide a broad range of rich learning experiences for pupils. They have a sound understanding of different cultures and the religious beliefs that people have. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Leaders have worked hard to improve the attendance of pupils. Pupils' attendance is much better than it was but there are still too many who do not attend often enough.

Pupils say bullying is rare. Adults deal with any incidents quickly. The school council and e-safety ambassadors are also on hand in lessons and at playtimes to make sure bullying does not happen.

The interim headteacher, trustees and local governors are determined to raise expectations for all pupils, which are not yet consistently high enough. Staff share leaders' firm belief that all pupils can achieve their best.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders and staff know the curriculum needs to improve. They have begun to make necessary changes. Most curriculum planning does not include the knowledge that pupils need to help them know more and remember more over time. Teachers do not have clear guidance about what pupils should know by the end of each year group in all subjects. In the small number of subjects where the curriculum is stronger, particularly mathematics, writing and physical education (PE), teachers plan lessons which build on pupils' knowledge and skills. Pupils achieve better in these subjects.

The school's approach to teaching early reading and phonics is not working well enough. Teachers do not use a systematic method to teach this well. Teachers use several phonics resources that do not work well together. In lessons, staff do not always make clear what it is they want pupils to learn. When this happens, pupils struggle. Some members of staff do not have enough expertise to help all pupils to learn to read from an early age.

Senior leaders have only recently appointed subject leaders. Some teachers do not have the required subject knowledge to plan and teach well in the wider curriculum. In some year groups, teachers do not support the development of pupils' reading skills effectively enough. As a result, some pupils struggle to read texts in the different subjects of the curriculum. Overall, therefore, pupils' achievement at the

end of key stage 2 is not good enough.

Staff in early years are unclear about the important things that children need to learn. They are unsure when children should know the link between different sounds and letters. As a result, children do not develop strong early reading skills. This means that some children are behind when they move into Year 1. Children in early years share resources, discuss their ideas and work well with their friends to complete activities. They play well together and enjoy exploring the world around them. For example, children told an inspector how they were using different materials to build a play house.

Teachers try to carefully adapt the curriculum for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils with SEND receive appropriate support through additional specialist help they get from well-trained staff. While teachers ensure that pupils with SEND achieve their individual targets, leaders know that overall the curriculum needs to be more ambitious for this group of pupils.

Staff appreciate the support they receive and the consideration of their workload. Nevertheless, the interim headteacher, trustees and local governors acknowledge the important work needed to improve the overall quality of education. Work is under way. Staff morale is high. The interim headteacher makes good use of the specialist support provided by the trust.

Pupils' personal development is good. Pupils develop their social skills well. Leaders provide a range of opportunities for pupils to develop their talents and interests such as learning different musical instruments. Pupils understand different people's views about a range of things because they debate current issues, for example Brexit. Pupils' understanding of British values such as democracy, liberty and tolerance is a real strength of the curriculum.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils are nurtured and kept safe. Leaders are vigilant about the signs that a pupil may be at risk. They ensure that all staff receive up-to-date training in safeguarding procedures. Staff are tenacious with following up concerns. They work effectively with external agencies to support vulnerable children and their families.

Leaders have clear, effective recruitment systems in place. They only appoint staff who are suitable to work with children.

Pupils feel safe. They know who to talk to if they are worried about anything.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum is not coherent or sequenced well in most subjects. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum planning for all subjects sets out the knowledge that pupils should learn and when they should learn it, so that it is ambitious for all pupils, including those with SEND. Leaders should check how well pupils are progressing through the curriculum.
- In some subjects, at times, pupils have difficulty understanding ideas when reading texts. This hinders their understanding of the topics they are taught. Leaders should ensure that teachers provide pupils with opportunities to use and apply their reading comprehension skills in all subjects. This will help pupils deepen their understanding of the concepts taught.
- Weaknesses in the school's phonics programme have left some pupils unable to read as well as they could and should. Leaders must implement a new systematic approach to the teaching of phonics and address this legacy as soon as possible. Leaders must also ensure that staff receive appropriate training. They should also ensure that pupils learn the right strategies to help them read unfamiliar words.
- The roles of curriculum leaders need to be developed to make sure they are effective. Curriculum leaders need to ensure that teachers have the skills to be able to implement and deliver a coherently planned curriculum in all subjects. Some teachers require training to develop their pedagogical and subject knowledge.
- Leaders do not ensure that the early years curriculum enables all children to develop, deepen and consolidate their knowledge, understanding and skills across all the areas of learning. Not enough children secure their knowledge of phonics to read accurately with increasing speed and fluency by the end of Reception. Leaders must ensure that the early curriculum enables children to learn all that they need to so that they are well prepared for Year 1.
- Leaders have been effective in improving pupils' rates of attendance. However, they still need to reduce the number of pupils who are persistently absent.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	143534
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	10111102
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	314
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of governing body	Chris Gentry
Headteacher	Amy Howlett
Website	www.princesrisboroughprimary.bucks.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school joined the Great Learner Trust in January 2017.
- The interim headteacher had been in post for seven weeks at the time of the inspection.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspectors held meetings with the interim headteacher, senior and subject leaders, the chief operating officer for the Great Learners Trust, the chair of trustees, the trust director of education, the school support partner, the chair of the local governing body and local governors.
- Inspectors did deep dives in the following subjects: reading, writing, mathematics, geography and history. In each subject, inspectors met with curriculum leaders, visited lessons, talked to pupils, spoke to teachers and looked at pupils' work.
- Inspectors considered views of staff from meeting with staff and from the

responses of 33 staff to the confidential questionnaire.

- Inspectors reviewed safeguarding records, including the central record of recruitment checks on staff.
- Inspectors spoke to parents during the inspection and considered the views of 25 parents who responded to Ofsted's parental questionnaire, Parent View.

Inspection team

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