

Inspection of Prince Bishops Community Primary School

Gibson Street, Coundon Grange, Bishop Auckland, County Durham DL14 8DY

Inspection dates: 6 and 7 February 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

This school was last inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 13 years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between graded inspections under section 5 of the Act. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are very well cared for at Prince Bishops Community Primary School. Adults build warm and supportive relationships with the pupils in their care. This positive atmosphere encourages pupils to behave well. Staff make pupils feel welcome. For example, pupils and visitors are greeted each morning by Jess, the school dog. Pupils learn about responsibility by helping to look after Jess.

Leaders are ambitious for what pupils can achieve. Pupils benefit from a strong start to their education in English and mathematics. The curriculum for personal development is particularly impressive. Staff provide pupils with a wide range of experiences that help them to be ready for the world beyond their local area. Pupils particularly value the Friday afternoon enrichment sessions, which provide an incentive and reward for their work during the week.

Staff teach pupils about the importance of honesty, ambition, responsibility and kindness. Pupils understand these core values that help them to show respect for others. The school is an inclusive environment, where the differences between people are celebrated. For example, pupils learn about one another's cultures, including the different languages spoken by pupils. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are particularly well supported to learn alongside their peers.

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

The school curriculum is ambitious. The foundations of the effective curriculum are established in the Nursery Years. Teachers understand the starting points of pupils. The curriculum content stimulates pupils' curiosity and encourages them to ask good questions in lessons. There are strong curriculum links to the local area, which allows pupils to make sense of the world around them. For example, in history, pupils visit a local Roman fort. Pupils develop their mathematical knowledge and use operations with increasing effectiveness as they progress through the curriculum. This begins in the early years where children learn to count confidently.

Reading is given a high priority in the school. Pupils show enthusiasm for reading. They are keen to explain about the characters and plots of the books they enjoy. There is a very effective approach to ensuring that pupils develop a broad vocabulary. The teaching of early reading is particularly effective. There is a consistent approach to the teaching of phonics. Pupils improve rapidly through regular repetition and practice. Pupils with SEND benefit from specific adaptations to support them with their reading. Pupils who are making slower progress than their peers are identified very quickly. These pupils have extra sessions that support them to keep up.

The strength in the reading and the mathematics curriculums is not reflected in the poor outcomes achieved by Year 6 pupils in 2023. These pupils experienced significant disruption to their learning as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Some pupils do not attend school as well as they could. Improving attendance is a priority for the school. Rigorous monitoring and follow-up encourage and support families to improve pupils' attendance. Every member of staff is an attendance champion for a small number of pupils. These strategies are having an impact. Attendance is higher this academic year than it was last year.

The breadth of the curriculum for pupils' personal development is exceptional. It is particularly well tailored to the individual needs of the pupils. The school is rightly proud of the way in which it develops pupils' resilience and character. This is underpinned by the school values. Pupils have a well-developed understanding of safety, from water safety to criminal exploitation and how to stay safe online.

Pupils throughout the school enthusiastically take up enrichment activities that give them new experiences. These activities are well planned to provide a coherent programme. For example, younger pupils develop their camping and outdoor skills to prepare for a residential visit when they are older. Understanding jobs in the outside world is part of the personal development programme. All pupils have a chance to apply for jobs in school as part of 'take-over day'. During this event, pupils will experience a range of roles, including caretaker, receptionist and even headteacher. They can link this experience to what they learn about jobs and the world of work from visiting guests at the careers fair.

Governors have a well-informed understanding of the school. They come from a range of backgrounds and have the right skills to challenge and support school leaders. The school works alongside external agencies to support safeguarding and pupils with SEND. The school draws on an effective network of support for staff development. Staff across the school are very committed to the pupils and to the community. They feel valued and well supported to fulfil their roles. Consideration of staff workload and well-being is foremost in school decisions.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some pupils have low attendance. This means that they are not routinely benefiting from the curriculum and enrichment opportunities offered by the school. The school should continue to embed strategies to monitor, encourage and support high attendance.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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.

Further information

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

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	134855
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10290147
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	231
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Alison Johnson
Headteacher	Lynn George
Website	www.princebishops.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	13 and 14 June 2011, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not use any alternative education providers.
- The school offers wraparound provision with a breakfast club and after-school club.
- The nursery has provision for two-year-olds.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgment about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior leaders. The lead inspector met with governors. The lead inspector also held a telephone conversation with a representative of Durham Local Education Authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, modern foreign languages and physical education. For each deep dive, the inspectors met with subject leaders, discussed the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of their work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The lead inspector studied a variety of documents. These included the school's development plan, minutes of governing body meetings, attendance information and safeguarding records.
- The views of parents and carers, staff and pupils were gathered through Ofsted's surveys and face-to-face discussions.

Inspection team

Carl Sugden, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Sarah Birch

Ofsted Inspector

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