



Princethorpe Junior School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 103244
LEA Birmingham
Inspection number 276874
Inspection dates 2 February 2006 to 3 February 2006
Reporting inspector Bogusia Matusiak-Varley AI

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

Type of school	Junior	School address	Princethorpe Road
School category	Community		Birmingham
Age range of pupils	7 to 11		West Midlands B29 5QB
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0121 4751083
Number on roll	182	Fax number	0121 4762817
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Christine Hopkins
Date of previous inspection	3 July 2000	Headteacher	Miss Georgina Arnold

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Princethorpe Junior is a small school situated in an area of high social deprivation in South Birmingham. Nearly half of the pupils are entitled to free school meals and a higher-than-average percentage have learning difficulties and disabilities. The proportion of pupils with statements of special educational need is above average. Most pupils are White British, and a few pupils are from African and Caribbean backgrounds. Many pupils on joining the school have significant barriers to learning and their language skills are weak. This is particularly so for some of those who join the school later than the usual time of first entry in Year 3. The school is presently undergoing structural alterations and a long-term programme of building works is being undertaken.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school which provides good value for money. School self- evaluation is very thorough but the school, in evaluating its effectiveness as satisfactory, does not congratulate itself enough in relation to the outcomes it achieves. Pupils' academic achievements are good and standards are broadly in line with national averages. Standards are rising quickly because of the good quality of teaching and learning, which has been promoted by the good leadership and management of the headteacher and her senior management team. Year 6 national test scores in mathematics have been too low, but standards are improving significantly. The school has good capacity to improve further. Pupils behave well and love learning. The school has worked tremendously hard to raise attendance, which is now average. Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and has a positive effect on the personal development of all pupils. The school takes good care of all learners and works very well with parents and outside agencies. However, occasionally pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are not receiving work that is appropriately matched to their needs because their individual education plans are not sufficiently well used in lessons. Although teaching and learning are good overall, not all teachers mark consistently well. Some teachers make very good use of information and communication technology (ICT) to enliven teaching and support pupils' learning, but this highly effective practice is not shared by all, partly because of limited ICT resources.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards further in mathematics and continue to develop pupils' skills of mental mathematics and problem solving.
- Ensure that teachers' marking is consistently helpful in showing pupils how to improve.
- Ensure that all teachers can make the best use of ICT to help pupils learn.
- Ensure that pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities receive work in lessons that is consistently matched to their needs and that their individual learning plans identify some specific targets for improvement

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' standards on joining the school are below those usually seen in schools for pupils of this age. Although national test data suggests that pupils' attainment on entry is broadly average, very few attain higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of infant school. Inspection findings show that in Year 3, pupils have weak writing, speaking and listening skills. They experience difficulties in reasoning, especially in mathematics, and they have weaknesses in retaining information. The 2005 national test results for Year 6 pupils show a very significant improvement, especially in English and science, on previous years' test scores, which were exceptionally low. This is because the headteacher and senior management team, with very good support from the Local Education Authority, have worked relentlessly at raising standards. The trend of improvement has outstripped the national trend

since 2002 and is continuing. It is supported by the challenging targets for further improvement set for 2006 in English and mathematics. Standards are broadly average in English, science and ICT and are just below average in mathematics, where pupils experience difficulty in retaining their times tables, problem solving and mental mathematics. The school has identified the further raising of standards in mathematics as its key priority. Pupils make good progress overall, and achieve well in overcoming their significant barriers to learning. However, sometimes when tasks set by teachers are too challenging, the progress of some pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is slowed.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The personal development and well-being of pupils are good. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils genuinely care about one another and are proud of their school. Pupils have very good attitudes to learning and the recent introduction of the 'I can do it' strategy is already having a very positive effect on pupils' self-esteem. Attendance rates have improved significantly as a result of the very hard work of the attendance officer, and are now satisfactory. Pupils' behaviour is good and is a direct result of good care and moral guidance, very good support from the learning mentor and very good partnership with parents. The school is a very safe community where any incidents of bullying or unacceptable behaviour are immediately dealt with. The school adopts very good safe practices. Pupils are confident, polite and well mannered and know that they are cherished by all staff for their uniqueness. An outstanding end-of-year graduation ceremony for Year 6, which recognises and rewards pupils' efforts, prompted the Chairman of the School Council to write a poem in which he says 'Although I say goodbye today, I am a Princethorpe all the way'. Pupils make a positive contribution to their school community and they know that their views are valued and listened to. Pupils, in spite of having limited financial resources, contribute generously to help others in need, such as the Ifakara Bakery Project where they helped people in Tanzania buy bread. Pupils are well prepared for their next phase of education and workplace skills such as teamwork and collaboration are well developed. They understand the importance of healthy eating and taking regular exercise.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good overall, and their quality has been supported through very good monitoring by the headteacher and senior management team. Teachers are given very good advice about how they can improve and this is paying dividends, as reflected in the improved test results of 2005. In the most effective lessons, class teachers communicate tremendous enthusiasm for what they are teaching and pupils are fired up to learn. Some teachers make very good use of ICT, including interactive

whiteboards, to bring learning alive for the pupils and help them understand more through the use of visual images. This good practice is not yet shared by all teachers, partly because not all rooms are well equipped with ICT resources. Teachers generally make good use of information from assessments to plan lessons which help to improve pupils' understanding and skills. Targets written in the individual education plans for those children with learning difficulties and disabilities are not as useful as they might be because they are too general. This leads to inconsistencies of interpretation by some teachers. However, when working in withdrawal groups and with support staff, pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities learn well. Teachers' marking is regular and, in some year groups, very helpful and supportive to pupils, but this is not the case in every year group. Parents and carers make a significant contribution to their children's progress because every effort is made to include them in understanding what their children are learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory in its breadth and balance. It offers some exciting experiences, including a good range of educational visits such as regular trips to Weoley Castle ruins, which contribute much to pupils' enjoyment and achievement in learning. The school has made good links with literacy in most subjects, especially in geography and history, where pupils are given good opportunities to write using a range of different styles. As yet, the school has not formally identified links across other subjects, especially in relation to developing pupils' skills of creativity and imagination. Extra-curricular provision is satisfactory, especially for sport, and after-school activities are well attended. The school has worked with an artist in residence with whom pupils in Year 5 have produced a colourful mural of the rainforest. The school has a satisfactory personal, social and health education programme, and pupils particularly enjoyed workshops organised by Life Education where they learnt about the effect substance abuse can have on their body.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good and contribute very strongly to pupils' well-being, progress and enjoyment of learning. The school is committed to providing a safe and secure environment and the recent building works have been very well managed. Child protection procedures are fully understood and adhered to by staff, and the work with outside agencies to support pupils in need is very well co-ordinated. The school places very strong emphasis on pupils' emotional well-being and pupils feel confident about talking to the staff about their problems. Academic guidance and support are good. Assessment data is well used to move pupils on in their learning and staff know when to step in to give their pupils additional support. The quality of advice and guidance given to parents about health and safety, well-being and academic progress is good. One parent interviewed said, 'Not only do they care about our kids but they make us feel good about ourselves too.'

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher, supported by the senior management team, has worked relentlessly at ensuring that the pupils and families are well provided for. Together, they have created a harmonious community within which pupils, parents and staff can flourish. Self-evaluation systems are good. Parents, pupils and governors are fully included in this self-evaluation and in all decision-making processes. The school has made good improvement since the last inspection and is now well placed to improve further. The leadership and management of literacy and numeracy are good, and are bringing about significant improvements in standards. The leadership and management of special educational needs are satisfactory, but have yet to secure consistently good provision for children with learning needs and disabilities in mainstream classes. Governors fulfil their duties well. They are very involved in the life of the school and provide good support and challenge. They know the strengths and weaknesses of the school well and are making good strides in evaluating the cost effectiveness of their spending decisions. Management procedures are efficient and effective and resources are deployed to secure the best outcomes for pupils.

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Dear Children We are writing to thank you for making us feel so welcome in your school and for helping us with our questions. We are glad that you enjoy your school and we agree with your views that your headteacher and teachers educate and look after you well. What we liked most about your school:

- You come to school regularly and enjoy your lessons.
- You make good progress in learning.
- Your teachers make learning interesting.
- You behave well and are good friends with one another.
- The headteacher and members of staff make sure that you get good lessons and they look after you well.

What we have asked the school to do:

- Ensure that you make better progress in mathematics in mental mathematics and problem solving.
- Ensure that all teachers consistently mark your work well and use ICT to support your learning.
- Make sure that those children who have learning difficulties and disabilities are given clearer plans that help them to achieve more success.

We wish you all the very best in the future. Yours faithfully Ms B Matusiak-Varley Lead Inspector