



# Princethorpe Infant School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 103245  
**LEA** Birmingham  
**Inspection number** 276875  
**Inspection dates** 21 February 2006 to 22 February 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Martin Kerly AI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Infant	<b>School address</b>	Princethorpe Road
<b>School category</b>	Community		Birmingham
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 7		West Midlands B29 5QB
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	0121 4752874
<b>Number on roll</b>	165	<b>Fax number</b>	0121 4762857
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	12 June 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs L Wildsmith

<b>Age group</b> 3 to 7	<b>Inspection dates</b> 21 February 2006 - 22 February 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 276875
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by a team of two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This average-sized infant school has a full-time nursery class and six other classes. Numbers are declining owing to external factors. Most children are from White British families, with a small number from mixed ethnic minority groups. More than half the children are eligible for free school meals. This is more than twice the national average, and is a measure of the considerable socio-economic deprivation experienced by many families in the community. Attainment on entry by many children is well below that expected nationally and nearly one third have learning difficulties..

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This good school has some excellent features and few weaknesses. It gives good value for money. The school has good systems for checking up on its performance. Inspection evidence confirms the accuracy of the school's rigorous judgements on its performance. Overall effective provision in the Nursery and Reception classes helps children get off to a good start at school. Although they progress well from a very low starting point, standards are still below the expected levels by the time they start Year 1. Good teaching, with excellent teaching in Year 2 and a wellplanned and interesting curriculum, ensures that good progress is sustained in all other classes. As a result, pupils reach standards that are close to the national average by the end of Year 2. Pupils' personal development is good. In the Nursery, and to an extent in Reception, children are given too few opportunities to learn independently through play. The care, guidance and support given to all pupils is excellent. Overall good leadership and management have helped the school raise standards further since the last inspection. The headteacher is an excellent leader and creates an atmosphere which enables staff to work together as a strong and enthusiastic team. Some recent and on-going senior staff absences have led to uncertainties regarding the distribution of roles and responsibilities and have required some colleagues to take on substantial additional workloads. The school has made good progress since the last inspection and is well placed to maintain its strengths and improve further.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Extend the opportunities for children's learning through independent play activities in the Foundation Stage, particularly in the Nursery.
- Review the allocation of responsibilities within the leadership team during ongoing and temporary absences of senior staff to avoid uncertainties and unequal workloads.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Achievement is good. Many children enter the school in the Nursery or Reception classes with standards well below national expectations, especially in personal, social and emotional development, language and literacy skills, physical development and some mathematical skills. Children make good progress during the nursery and reception years. Nevertheless, by the time they enter Year 1, they are still below national expectations in some aspects of learning, especially in language and literacy skills, and in their ability to work independently. This overall good progress is maintained by pupils of all abilities and groups in Years 1 and 2, so that by the end of Year 2, they attain standards broadly in line with the national average in reading, mathematics and science. A few pupils make excellent progress as a result of high expectations and high quality teaching. Progress in writing is also good overall, but many pupils' poor speaking and listening skills continue to restrict their writing abilities, which remain just below average by the end of Year 2. Pupils with learning difficulties make good and sometimes

excellent progress in all year groups as a result of very carefully planned activities. The school has high expectations of all pupils and sets very challenging targets for them. These targets are usually met and sometimes exceeded.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, remains good and this contributes significantly to their success. Parents overwhelmingly support this view. Attendance is below the national average but above rates frequently found in similar neighbourhoods. Most pupils' attendance is good and the school works very effectively with the families of those few pupils whose attendance is poor. The good behaviour throughout the day makes for a calm atmosphere in lessons. Pupils know a lot about healthy lifestyles, and the visiting 'Life Education Bus' helps them to learn important facts about their bodies and the dangers of smoking or using other substances. Members of the recently formed School Council take huge pride in their work. Pupils have a good awareness of the need to contribute to the community. For example, at the time of the inspection, pupils in Year 1 were busy organising a 'bring and buy sale' to raise money for charity. A wide range of stimulating activities means that pupils learn to appreciate and enjoy the wonders of life, and begin to understand how people from all different cultures celebrate and contribute to their lives. Through work they do in subjects such as English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT), pupils make good progress in developing the key skills they will need to help them become successful as they grow up.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

The overall good teaching, with some in Year 2 being excellent, leads to good learning by pupils. This has been recognised by the award of the national Quality Mark Status in 2001, which was renewed in 2004. Teachers make excellent use of all information gained from checking pupils' progress to ensure that work is matched precisely to the needs of all individuals. The school has a very good number of adults deployed in each class, including a well-trained and experienced team of teaching assistants. As a result, pupils receive much personal attention to help boost their progress, often being taught in very small groups, particularly in English and mathematics lessons in Years 1 and 2. The teachers set high expectations for pupils' achievement and behaviour and they plan an interesting range of activities. In Years 1 and 2 pupils are often encouraged to work independently. This strong provision ensures pupils are enthused and motivated. The very effective support for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities enables them to progress well alongside their peers in all classes. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good overall, with most of the above strengths. However, at times, children are too directed by the teachers, especially in the Nursery, with fewer

stimulating activities and insufficient opportunities to work independently and learn through play activities.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good. The rich variety of activities offered ensures pupils enjoy learning. High quality displays of work in Years 1 and 2 and the good links made between subjects enhance pupils' learning and broaden their understanding. Significant improvements have been made since the last inspection. For example, the improvement in learning through ICT results in high quality work in many subjects, for example the artwork produced on computers. There is a clear whole-school focus on developing speaking and listening skills and some excellent experiences were observed in Year 2, with pupils working in pairs giving and responding to instructions. Pupils with learning difficulties are catered for very well and fully included in all activities. Many extra activities are held during the lunch hour enabling all pupils to participate and improve their physical fitness. In the nursery and reception classes, provision for personal, social and emotional development is good. However, there is not always enough time allocated for children to learn as they play and some work in the nursery is too heavily directed by adults, so that children are not sufficiently encouraged to explore and solve problems by themselves.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

The care, guidance and support throughout the school are outstanding and a significant factor in pupils' good achievement. This view is endorsed by all parents responding to the inspectors' survey. All health and safety procedures are rigorous, as are the arrangements for protecting children. The school has outstanding systems for tracking pupils' progress. Staff make excellent use of the information gained to set ambitious targets to accelerate pupils' performance. Excellent liaison and partnerships with people such as the physiotherapist and the Attendance Improvement Worker help children and their families to overcome learning difficulties and personal problems. Children are supported very well when they join the school in the Nursery, as are those who join further up the school. There are excellent procedures for supporting transition from one year to the next. All teachers liaise very well, planning together to make sure that pupils continue to make good progress in their learning and personal development.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good, with some excellent features. The headteacher provides excellent leadership. She has very high expectations for all the pupils' academic and personal development. Working closely with staff, she ensures that pupils receive a rich variety of experiences to help broaden their understanding. Her clear vision, energy and very good organisational skills ensure that those around her work effectively

and efficiently. The resulting strong provision for helping pupils to achieve well means the school is providing good value for money. Other leadership roles have been fulfilled well, including the provision for the many pupils with learning difficulties, the coordination of school improvement and leadership of the Foundation Stage. However, there is no clear plan about how best to deal with recent and continuing senior staff absences. This is leading to some uncertainties about the distribution of leadership roles and is requiring some staff to take on substantial additional workloads. The school is good at evaluating its own performance and has an accurate view of what is working well and what needs improvement. There has been good progress in all previously reported areas needing improvement and the school is well placed to maintain its strengths and improve further. Highly effective professional development programmes are carefully linked to school needs in order to improve the quality of provision. The excellent system to track pupils' progress and set precise targets for individuals is a key factor in the good overall achievement of pupils. Governance is satisfactory. Governors are supportive and committed and fulfil their statutory roles. The new chairman is strengthening their role in strategic decision making and holding the school to account.

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## Inspection judgements

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

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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	2	NA

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1	NA

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	1	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	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
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 As you probably remember a team of two inspectors visited your school recently to find out how well the school is doing. Thank you for making us so welcome. We enjoyed talking to you and seeing some of your work. I am pleased to say that, for lots of reasons, we decided that Princethorpe Infant School is a good school. Here are some of the most important things we found to be good:

- You make good progress in your lessons.
- You behave well.
- The school has lots of good teachers and teaching assistants and some are excellent.
- Teachers plan really interesting things for you to do, particularly in Years 1 and 2.
- Everyone who works at the school makes sure that you are safe and well cared for.
- Your headteacher works very hard to make sure this is a good school. We have asked the headteacher, staff and governors to work together to improve two things:
- Help the children in reception and nursery to experiment and play more for themselves rather than being told exactly what to do and how to do it.
- Sort out how to cover the jobs done by the senior teachers when some of them are absent from school for long periods.

Thank you for helping us with the inspection. We hope you carry on enjoying your school. Yours sincerely Martin Kerly Lead Inspector