

Princes Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104750
Local Authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	287022
Inspection dates	23–24 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Michael McDowell

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	80
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr Peter Hawkins
Headteacher	Mrs Val Healy
Date of previous school inspection	9 December 2002
School address	Selborne Street Liverpool Merseyside L8 1YQ
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a community special school for pupils who have a statement of special educational need because of their severe (SLD) or profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD). A minority has, additionally, autistic spectrum disorders (ASD). Because of their learning difficulties and/or disabilities, pupils' attainment is well below average. Occasionally, pupils are placed at the school for assessment before the process of issuing a statement is complete. Pupils come from across the City of Liverpool. Most are White and British but a small number are from minority ethnic groups.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The overall effectiveness of the school is good. In the Foundation Stage children make good progress towards their early learning goals and their personal targets. Progress for the majority continues to be good in Years 1 to 6 in most subjects and areas of learning, although it is generally better in English and communication skills than it is in mathematics. The majority of pupils with ASD make good progress and, for a few, progress is very good. However, a very small minority of the pupils with ASD and who start at the lowest levels make satisfactory, rather than good, progress in most areas. Pupils are taught well. Teachers use effective methods to develop pupils' communication skills and manage their behaviour. Assessment is thorough. Work is well matched to pupils' capabilities. Teaching and welfare assistants know and carry out their roles effectively. Lessons are lively and imaginative and pupils join in them happily and learn well. The teaching of those pupils with ASD who are in the specialist class is of high quality, and those with PMLD are taught effectively.

Personal development is outstanding. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, and pupils enjoy school. Attendance is good, and pupils become very well behaved and confident learners. Pupils feel safe and trust their teachers and helpers. They develop their communication and self-help skills well and use these to contribute to the school, the community outside it, and to become more independent. They are committed to healthy lifestyles. They take to physical activity and sport exceptionally well. The curriculum is good. It meets the individual needs of pupils and the requirements of the National Curriculum. It provides very well for pupils' personal development.

Care, guidance and support for pupils are outstanding. The school watches the progress of its pupils very closely and sets them realistic, challenging, targets. They are given all the help they need to become confident, secure and happy learners. Health and safety are exceptionally well promoted. Child protection arrangements are robust. The school is vigilant in safeguarding the welfare of the most vulnerable pupils.

Leadership and management are good. The school has, over time, improved standards of achievement, pupils' personal development and the quality of teaching. The school has an accurate picture of its own performance. There is excellent equality of opportunity and inclusion is promoted very well. Pupils have many chances to learn and play alongside others from mainstream schools. Financial management is secure and resources are used well. The school runs efficiently and smoothly in its day-to-day activities. Governance is rigorous and supportive. Overall improvement since the last inspection is good and the leadership is capable of improving the school further. It gives good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve achievement in the areas, such as mathematics, in which pupils' progress is less marked.
- Improve the progress made by pupils with ASD who have very low starting points.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good. Most children in the Foundation Stage make good progress towards their learning goals. They develop effective communication skills. They learn and respond to the

signs and picture cues that are skilfully used by their teachers to back up oral language. For the majority, physical, personal, social and emotional development is particularly good.

Overall, pupils in Years 1 to 6 continue to make good progress. They build on their early gains, especially in the development of communication skills, reading and writing. Pupils do well in most of the subjects they are taught. In physical education they achieve high standards in swimming and in adapted games, and they make significant progress in science and in personal, social and health education. However, in mathematics, progress is not quite as good as it is in English. In each year group, the overall achievement of most pupils compares favourably with that of children from similar schools who have the same starting points and similar learning difficulties. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties make good gains. The well delivered sensory curriculum helps them to join in stimulating classroom activities. In most cases, pupils with ASD make good progress. The progress made by a few higher achieving pupils in this group is exceptionally good. However, across the age range, a very small minority of pupils with ASD with very low starting points do not achieve as well as most. Their progress, while broadly average, is markedly slower than the majority.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Personal development and well-being are outstanding. Because pupils learn to communicate effectively through speech, sign, pictures and symbols, they become confident learners. They readily join in their lessons and enjoy the many opportunities to learn and play outside the classroom that the school provides.

Attendance is good and pupils behave very well. Their response to well planned opportunities to learn about and understand their own feelings is excellent. Those who previously have been challenging learn to control their emotional reactions and impulses. Pupils feel safe and are not afraid that they might be bullied or hurt by others. They are certain that there will always be a trusted adult to whom they can turn. Pupils' commitment to healthy lifestyles is exceptional. They are encouraged to try out healthy foods at snack time and most are willing to do this. They choose their lunch from a range of healthy options. However, it is in their commitment to and take-up of opportunities for physical activity that they particularly welcome. During break times and beyond the school day pupils are very active. They play games such as Boccia, Kwik cricket and football, and they particularly enjoy swimming. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Pupils behave safely and understand the need for simple rules of conduct that they readily obey. Most make good use of the planned quiet moments during assemblies, circle times and at the end of the school day, becoming very calm and thoughtful. They like to take on responsibilities and to help others in the classrooms and about the school. The school council members are very proud of the part they play in bringing about improvements.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Teachers assess their pupils thoroughly and know them very well. Challenging targets are set for each pupil and work is well matched to each pupil's capabilities. Pupils are helped to understand what they have achieved and what they need to improve. Teachers know and take into account the ways in which individual pupils prefer to

learn and lessons contain a rich variety of experiences. There is a strong emphasis on active participation so that pupils learn by doing. Communication skills are developed effectively because the use of sign, picture exchange and symbolic writing is very consistent. Management of classes is good. All classroom staff understand their roles and carry these out well. Teaching assistants and support staff are of great benefit to both pupils' learning and their comfort. All staff use agreed and well understood methods to deal with challenging behaviour and reduce its occurrence. Teaching of pupils with PMLD is successful. It makes use of all of pupils' senses to stimulate them and encourage them to learn. The teaching of pupils in the special ASD class is of high quality, showing great expertise. However, not all teachers have this skill and pupils with ASD who are not in the specialist class have less access to such expert help.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. The school understands that pupils will only make academic progress if their personal and social skills are sufficiently well developed. Therefore, it places emphasis from the earliest stage on enabling pupils to understand and respond to others through speaking and listening, signing or using a picture exchange system. It also plans for and encourages pupils to do things for themselves and for others and to become as independent as possible. The curriculum complies with requirements. English is particularly well provided for and the opportunities for physical education, including swimming and games are very good. Because results showed that pupils' progress in mathematics lagged behind that in English, provision for mathematics is recently improved. The curriculum is enriched by the many opportunities, particularly involving sport and physical activity, that the school offers to its pupils beyond the school day. There are, however, no opportunities for pupils to benefit from residential visits.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school provides outstanding care, guidance and support. It keeps the pupils' progress under review and carefully analyses the information that it gathers. It sets realistic and challenging targets for pupils and involves parents and carers in regularly reviewing these. Teachers are strongly committed to the interests of their pupils. Out of school activities that are important for pupils' learning and personal development receive strong support from the staff. Arrangements to ensure health and safety are exceptionally thorough. The school employs a consultant to carry out frequent checks on all potential hazards. The risks to pupils that might arise from planned activities are carefully assessed. Child Protection arrangements are robust and regularly reviewed. The school promotes the well-being of pupils exceptionally well. It works very effectively alongside health care professionals, including the school nurse, to assist parents and carers in managing problems that arise from their children's difficulties and disabilities. The school is vigilant in identifying threats to the welfare of vulnerable pupils. It works tirelessly and effectively to organise support from other agencies to help pupils and families in difficulty.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides the school with a clear sense of purpose. She is well supported by a leadership team who share her view about the educational

direction the school must take. The issues raised by the last report have been dealt with effectively. Pupils' standards of achievement have much improved, teaching is now good and the personal development of learners is now promoted exceptionally well. Since the last inspection, provision has been successfully developed to meet the needs of pupils whose needs are more diverse. The school leadership monitors the progress of pupils very thoroughly and keeps a watchful eye on the achievement of all groups. It is aware of the school's strengths and areas for development. Improvement planning is well established and plans are firmly based on continuous review of the school's performance. Commitment to inclusion is very good and pupils have many opportunities to learn and play alongside others from mainstream schools.

Good management ensures that the school runs calmly and efficiently. Parents hold the school in high regard. Their relationships with the school are positive and their views are sought about its performance. Liaison and collaboration with external agencies including health and social service professionals is very good and serves the interests of pupils well. Governance is strong and effective. Governors carry out their roles with rigour and commitment.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall
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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

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

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

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you very much for the help you gave me when I came to your school. You were very polite and friendly when I came into your classrooms and when I joined you at lunch and play times. I thought that you tried very hard in your lessons and enjoyed what you were asked to do. I noticed that you had lots of fun when you acted out the story of 'The Lighthouse Keeper's Lunch' or when others of you matched coloured shapes to the same shapes on your carpet.

At lunch-break, Boccia players showed a lot of skill and determination to hit the target and those in the reading club looked really happy. I would especially like to thank the school council for spending time with me and answering my questions. I felt sure that you were very proud to be members of the council and to be representing all of your fellow pupils. You told me that you enjoy school very much. You are not afraid of the other boys or girls hurting you and that you know that there is always a grown-up who you trust to whom you can turn if you have a problem.

From what I saw in your classrooms and from talking to Mrs Healy, your teachers, your helpers and Dr. Hawkins, I am sure that yours is a good school that does most things well and some very well. I found that most of you make good progress and some of you do exceptionally well. You could, however, do better in maths so you will have to try as hard as you can during your lessons.

You are very well behaved, try to help others and are very keen to take part in games and sport. Your teachers make learning fun and help you to do your best. The school gives you lots of interesting things to do and makes sure you have the chance to learn those things that are most important to you. You are very well cared for, kept safe and given the help you need. Mrs Healy and her staff, together with the governors lead and manage the school well.

To help the school to improve, I have asked Mrs. Healey and the teachers to find ways to help a few pupils who find school work very hard to do better. I have also asked them to help you to do as well in maths as you do in your other subjects.

Thank you once more for your helpfulness.