



# Prince Rock Primary School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 113344  
**Local Authority** Plymouth  
**Inspection number** 289589  
**Inspection dates** 18–19 January 2007  
**Reporting inspector** Michael Barron

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Embankment Road
<b>School category</b>	Community		Plymouth
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11		PL4 9JF
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01752 257698
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	189	<b>Fax number</b>	01752 254409
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Carol Bull
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Simon Spry
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	26 March 2001		

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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

Prince Rock is a smaller than average primary school. The number of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is above the national average. A higher than average number of pupils enter or leave the school within the school year. A small but growing number of pupils have a first language other than English.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

The comment on the parents' questionnaire was simply, 'My child came home from school with a big smile', but it said a lot about Prince Rock Primary. This is a good school which provides a good education for its pupils. It is led by a dynamic headteacher who has ensured that staff share his vision of raising standards through improving achievement and providing pupils with a stimulating curriculum. Staff have worked well together to ensure that the school has analysed and evaluated its performance accurately and implemented improvements where needed. However, the good quality of this analysis and its impact on school development is not reflected in the quality of school improvement planning documentation.

Children enter the Foundation Stage with well below average attainment and often display weak skills in communication and language. They make good progress because provision is well planned and meets their needs well. However, most enter Year 1 with below average attainment, and well below average language development. Standards are presently below average in Year 6 but, given the very low starting points of pupils, this represents good progress and good achievement. The school is aware that standards still need to improve, especially in English and mathematics.

Pupils' personal development is good. Parents appreciate the school's caring environment whilst pupils say they feel safe and well looked after. They describe the school as friendly and enjoyable. Pupils behave well and show respect for others. They display responsible attitudes, have a good community spirit and make sensible and healthy choices.

The quality of teaching is good and is an important factor in bringing about good achievement. Teachers and teaching assistants work well to ensure pupils get the most out of lessons, which are usually briskly paced and enjoyable. As a result, most lessons engage the attention of pupils and they work well. A range of additional activities that further develop pupils' skills and their enjoyment of learning enriches the curriculum. Procedures for care, guidance and support are good and contribute to pupils' progress and their sense of well-being.

Leadership and management are good. However, whilst the governing body fulfils its duties satisfactorily, not all governors are involved in supporting and challenging the school on a regular basis. As a result, those governors who are more actively involved with the school have to take on extra responsibilities. The school has developed a clear view of its strengths and weaknesses. It recognises the work it has to do to bring about improvement and demonstrates a good capacity to achieve this.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Develop pupils' writing skills in order to raise standards in English.
- Develop pupils' problem solving skills in order to raise standards in mathematics.
- Ensure that all members of the governing body take an active part in supporting and challenging the school.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils in all year groups achieve well. Children's standards on starting school in the Foundation Stage are consistently well below average. They make good progress both in the Foundation Stage and across the school as a whole because teaching is good and the curriculum meets their needs well. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, and the small number of pupils at the early stages of English language acquisition, make the same good progress because of the good support they receive.

However, even though pupils achieve well, standards in Year 6 are still below the national average, especially in English and mathematics. The school recognises the continued need to raise standards and has developed a range of ongoing strategies to help bring this about, including focusing on improving pupils' problem-solving skills and improving sentence construction in writing.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils enjoy coming to school. They say 'everyone works together very well' and 'this is a happy school'. Staff have created an atmosphere where there is no fear of failure. This has a positive impact on learning. Relationships are strong and pupils from all backgrounds work and play together well. Attitudes and behaviour are good and pupils respond well to the system of rewards and consequences. They say the school deals effectively with incidents of bullying whilst peer mediators are trained to help solve minor disputes in the playground.

Pupils have developed a good understanding of the need to keep fit and many take part in the wide variety of sporting activities on offer. The school's involvement in the Healthy Schools Scheme has enabled pupils to make informed choices about what they eat. They have a good understanding of keeping themselves safe. Pupils were involved in drawing up a risk assessment for their recent walking trip to the local aquarium. Economic well-being is satisfactory and is enhanced by giving pupils responsibilities such as helping in the school office. However, it is hampered by less well developed numeracy and literacy skills. The school council gives pupils an active part in school decision making. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and pupils have a good understanding of the wider world.

Despite the best efforts of the school to promote regular attendance, attendance levels are still below average.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good and provides children with a range of activities combining independent learning with teacher-directed tasks. Lessons are well organised and adults work well to ensure children feel safe, happy and secure. As a result, children make good progress.

The quality of teaching throughout the rest of the school is variable, although good overall. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together to help pupils with their learning, especially when supporting pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities or those at the early stages of learning English. Pupils work hard and present their work well.

Pupils are usually provided with work which matches their individual needs and teachers use a variety of approaches to try to make learning interesting. Lessons are well structured, well paced and have a clear purpose. However, there are occasions when pupils are not provided with work that offers them sufficient challenge and this can affect their progress.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

The school provides pupils with a creative and innovative curriculum which meets their needs well. The good range of learning opportunities provided for children in the Foundation Stage contributes to their enjoyment and their developing independence, although the lack of a covered outdoor area affects their opportunities to develop the skills associated with outdoor play. Good planning and provision for personal, social and health education ensures that pupils are aware of the importance of fitness and well-being. A wide range of interesting visits and visitors to the school, for example, to Dartmoor National Park, increases pupils' enjoyment of learning and their understanding of the wider world. The school also makes good use of the community to extend pupils' learning and uses its links with, for example, Devon Wildlife Trust and Plymouth Youth Afloat, to provide pupils with experiences of life outside their urban locality. Pupils have regular opportunities to take part in an outstanding variety of popular and well supported out-of-school activities, including sports clubs.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 2

Procedures for care, guidance and support are good and contribute to pupils' progress, sense of well-being and enjoyment of learning. Staff show very high levels of care and concern for pupils and provide a welcoming atmosphere to all children regardless of when they join the school. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school and comment on the caring way their children are supported. Pupils feel safe and happy.

They know there is always someone to turn to if they have a problem. Health and safety routines are good and risk assessments meet current government guidelines. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together to ensure that pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, and those at the early stages of learning English, are provided with the support they need in order to make good progress. Support for gifted and talented pupils is good and they, too, make good progress. Child protection procedures are understood and followed by staff. The school has developed robust systems to track pupils' progress and uses this data well to ensure potential underachievement is tackled through focused intervention programmes. Teachers mark pupils' work well but, even so, pupils are not always clear about their next steps in their learning.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The headteacher leads and manages the school well and receives good support from his senior management team. Together, they are committed to placing pupils' needs and equal opportunities at the heart of school life and have been thorough in their analysis of the school's performance. As a result, the school has developed a successful approach to raising achievement. The governing body fulfils its statutory duties satisfactorily and is involved in all major decisions about the school but not all governors are involved in school life on a regular basis or take an active part in monitoring the curriculum. As a result, not all governors offer the school the support and challenge expected from them and this results in a small core of governors taking on extra responsibilities.

The school works closely with parents, who appreciate that it regularly seeks and takes account of their views. Links with external agencies, such as the psychological services, support pupils' learning well. Resources are good, although there is no covered outdoor provision for Foundation Stage children.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
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

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

### The quality of provision

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

<sup>1</sup> 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.

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	2
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	3
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

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for making us feel very welcome when we visited your school. We really enjoyed our two days and especially liked talking to some of you about what you enjoy the most about your school and seeing you at work in lessons. A special thanks to all of you, including your teachers and other adults, for being so friendly.

Here are some of the things we particularly like about your school:

- We believe Prince Rock is a good school which gives you a good start to your education.
- We think that you behave well and that you are very polite and well mannered.
- We feel your headteacher and teachers take good care of you and run the school well.
- We believe that you make good progress in learning because of good teaching.
- We were also impressed by how much you like your school and how you enjoy taking part in the many extra activities provided for you. We think your headteacher and teachers can do some things to make your school even better. We have asked them to:
  - Try to make sure you improve the standard of your work in mathematics and English, especially your writing and your ability to solve mathematics problems.
  - Try to make sure that more governors get involved in supporting the school. You can help your school to get even better by continuing to work hard in lessons and coming to school as often as you possibly can.

We wish you the very best for the future.