

# Prince Albert Junior and Infant School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	103154
<b>Local Authority</b>	Birmingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	308234
<b>Inspection dates</b>	8–9 October 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	David Driscoll

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 category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	725
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Sham Hussain
<b>Headteacher</b>	Hilary Pugh
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	3 November 2003
<b>School address</b>	Albert Road Aston Birmingham B6 5NH
<b>Telephone number</b>	0121 3270594
<b>Fax number</b>	0121 3282911

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by four Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Prince Albert is a very large inner city primary school. Almost all pupils come from a Pakistani or Bangladeshi background and speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Prince Albert provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. Children get off to a cracking start in the Foundation Stage. Many have particularly weak language skills on joining, but teachers use every possible opportunity to improve their skills so that language is no longer a barrier to their progress further up the school. From Year 1 on, most pupils make good progress, especially in their writing, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) skills. However, pupils with learning difficulties progress at a much slower rate, so their achievement is just satisfactory. The difference in performance between these two groups is down to the teaching and the curriculum. For most pupils, and especially the higher attainers, the work is demanding, with teachers asking challenging questions that make pupils think hard. The curriculum for those with learning difficulties is not planned well enough and work is often too easy, even when they are withdrawn from lessons for small group work. For all pupils, progress in reading and science is slower than in other subjects, mainly because their achievements are not tracked sufficiently well. As a result, teachers are not as aware of what needs to be done to ensure pupils make the progress as they should be in these subjects. This is in contrast to the Foundation Stage, where there is frequent and highly accurate assessment of every child's progress in all areas of their learning.

Pupils really enjoy coming to school, and love all the extra clubs and activities. They get on well with one another and, in particular, show a good deal of respect for other's beliefs. They are invariably polite and behave well both in and out of lessons. They feel safe and secure in this oasis of calm, because they know they are well looked after.

The school's senior managers, including governors, have made some significant improvements in areas that they have identified as priorities, proving that they have the skills needed to take the school forward. The Foundation Stage, for example, has gone from strength to strength, because great attention is paid to improving even the smallest weakness. However, some of the data that is used by senior managers is either inaccurate or is not analysed in sufficient detail to identify all the areas that need to be improved. Because of this, their evaluation of the school's effectiveness is overly generous. The school's partnerships with parents and organisations in the area are a real strength, helped in no small part by the work of governors in forging links between the school and the local community.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 1

Pupils make remarkable progress in the Foundation Stage. They enter nursery with low skill levels but by the end of Reception, their progress is excellent. Such outstanding achievement is brought about by a large group of staff who work exceptionally well as a team. They all plan together, so are very well briefed on what they will be doing and the needs of each child. Their depth of understanding of each child is based on a system of continuous assessment that accurately identifies the stage that each child has reached in their learning, and what they need to do next. Children are given every opportunity to speak and listen to others. This has proved highly effective in helping pupils to overcome language difficulties. Excellent use is made of the whole learning environment, including the outside which operates as one giant classroom where children are helped to choose the area that will allow them to learn at the best rate. An 'open door' policy exists for parents, which develops their understanding of, and gets them

involved in, the education of their children. Leadership of the Foundation Stage is visionary and the provision is constantly evolving to meet the needs of the children.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Improve the progress of pupils with learning difficulties by planning work for them that is sufficiently demanding.
- Improve pupils' achievement in reading and science by tracking their progress more effectively to ensure that pupils make the progress they should.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring data is accurate and is analysed in greater depth to identify strengths and weaknesses in the school's work.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils leave school with standards that are below average, and are satisfactorily prepared for the next stage of their education. Children join the Nursery with standards that are well below those expected for their age. Their progress through the Foundation Stage is outstanding in all respects. From then on, pupils make good progress in their writing, mathematics and ICT skills, and satisfactory progress in reading and science. Nevertheless, within this picture there are very clear differences in the performances of two particular groups. Those without learning difficulties make good progress, but the progress of those with learning difficulties is just satisfactory.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils have good attitudes to work and relate warmly to adults and each other. They are polite to visitors and to one another. Behaviour is invariably good.

The school's data shows attendance to be exceptionally low, but this is not accurate because it includes children who are not of school age. More rigorous analysis of the data shows attendance to be satisfactory, but still below average.

Pupils take part in lots of activities with the local community, such as the trip to Barry Island. They also play a good role in the school, helping to make rules and assisting in lessons. Pupils show particular respect for other faiths and cultures. One Year 1 girl, for example, asked an inspector if she would be celebrating Eid. When the answer was 'no', the pupil asked about Christmas instead and showed a clear understanding of what each festival was about. Pupils make good choices of food at lunchtimes and are very active at breaks. They talk confidently about ways of staying safe and are well aware of the problems of 'gang culture' which they see as 'really bad and silly'. Pupils are, in many respects, well prepared for their role in society. This, however, is not the case for all, and the less effective academic progress for those with learning difficulties means that they are not as well prepared.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

Throughout the school, teachers make very good use of ICT to improve pupils' research skills and to bring lessons to life. In the Foundation Stage, teachers take equal account of the needs of all pupils, but this is not always the case in other years. Middle and higher ability pupils are often taught well and, as a result, make good progress. The work takes account of the levels they have reached and is demanding enough to stretch even the most able. Those with learning difficulties are often given tasks that are too easy, such as cutting out with paper and scissors. This is because teachers do not take enough account of the guidance provided in pupils' individual education plans. As a result, their progress is slower.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

Over recent years, there have been improvements to the curriculum. Pupils now have more opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills in lessons. This, together with a better focus on improving pupils' writing, has had a positive impact on their standards in writing. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 can now work at home on computers that are linked to the school, effectively extending their working day. Parents are able to download podcasts of lessons in home languages from the school's website, so they can play a greater role in supporting their children.

In the Foundation Stage, children benefit from an exciting curriculum and so are keen to learn. There is good attention to ensuring that those pupils whose first language is not English develop their language skills well, while those pupils who still need more support further up the school get all the help they need. However, the school has not been as effective in developing a curriculum that meets the needs of those pupils with learning difficulties. The work planned does not always hold their interest, or challenge them enough, especially in the withdrawal groups. Pupils who have specific help through 'reading recovery' do well, but this is not made available to all those who would benefit.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 3

The strong commitment by teachers and other adults to support pupils' personal development appreciably raises their self-esteem and confidence. Pupils' safety and welfare, including child protection, are promoted well, so that pupils feel safe and well cared for in school. Good links with parents and outside agencies safeguard the most vulnerable pupils, and the overwhelming majority of parents are very pleased with the care their children receive. Pupils' progress in writing and mathematics is tracked well, so teachers are able to provide good guidance on exactly what needs to be improved. This is not the case in science, where progress is not tracked, or in reading where most pupils' progress is not checked frequently enough. Those on the reading recovery scheme are tracked much more closely, so their weaknesses are identified and they are guided to improve. As a result, this group makes much better progress in their reading than others.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

Good improvements have been made in some areas of the school's work since it was last inspected. Writing was made a priority, for example, and the school's managers, including governors, have been successful in raising standards significantly in this area. However, whilst some aspects have been getting better, others have not received enough attention, because information about progress is not used well enough. The school's use of challenging targets to get more pupils to Level 4 has worked, but those with learning difficulties are given less challenging targets and this reflects the school's lower expectations of these pupils in relation to their individual abilities. Their slower progress has not been identified or acted upon, either because the data has not been analysed in sufficient depth, or because checks on teaching do not identify differences in the progress of different groups. Equally, not all data is accurate, such as information about attendance, and this prevents the school from having a clear understanding of what needs to be improved.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

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

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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

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

<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.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
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**

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Prince Albert Junior and Infant School, Birmingham, B6 5NH

Thank you for helping us when we visited your school. We thought you were very polite and well behaved. We were impressed by how hard you work in lessons. We could tell you like coming to school, because so many of you walk around with big smiles on your faces.

We found that you are getting a satisfactory education. You get off to a fantastic start in Nursery and Reception. Many of you do well in the rest of the school, because your teachers are good at giving you work that really makes you think. Some of you though, who find learning more difficult, could still do a lot better. To help you, we have asked your teachers to make sure you are always given work that is just right for you, and not too easy. You also do better in your writing and maths than you do in your reading and science. So, we have asked your teachers to keep a closer check on how well you are doing in reading and science, so they can spot when some of you might need more help. We all thought that you are very good with computers and know a lot about how other people in Britain live.

You told us that you like coming to school because you have lots of friends and few worries. We agree. You all get on well with each other. Your teachers make sure you are safe, and are quick to help any of you who are unhappy. The people who run the school have done well to improve your writing, but they have missed some other things because they do not always look for patterns in the information about how well you are doing or how often you come to school. Because of this, we have asked them to make sure all the information about you is correct and that they check it in as much detail as they can.

With all best wishes for your future

David Driscoll Lead inspector

10 October 2007

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David Driscoll  
Lead inspector