

# Princethorpe Junior School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	103244
<b>Local Authority</b>	Birmingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	323780
<b>Inspection dates</b>	4–5 March 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Ruth Westbrook

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>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	167
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Christine Hopkins
<b>Headteacher</b>	Georgina Arnold
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	3 February 2006
<b>School address</b>	Princethorpe Road Weoley Castle Birmingham B29 5QB
<b>Telephone number</b>	0121 4751083
<b>Fax number</b>	0121 4762817

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a small school situated in an area of high social disadvantage in the south-west of Birmingham. The proportions of pupils eligible for free school meals and with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well above average. Most pupils are White British, but the number of pupils from minority ethnic groups has been increasing in recent years. The percentage of pupils for whom English is an additional language is below average and very few are at an early stage of learning English. The number of pupils arriving in the school after the start of Year 3 has increased in recent years. In the academic year 2007/08, the school experienced a number of staff shortages which particularly affected senior leadership and the leadership of special educational needs. These were resolved at the start of this academic year. The school has received an Activemark.

## 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. There is a strong commitment from all involved in the school community to create a successful, caring school where pupils are encouraged to make full use of all it can offer and achieve to the best of their ability. The care, guidance and support provided are good. Staff and governors have a clear understanding of the needs of the community and have established a well-respected programme to meet those needs. This has improved relationships with parents and provided cohesiveness within the locality. The family support programme has helped parents to better understand their children's education, to improve their own qualifications or to find support for any problems which might be affecting family life. As one parent put it, 'the school is very much a part of the community'.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils enjoy school very much and are proud of their own successes and those of others, as celebrated in assemblies. They are welcoming and polite to visitors and their positive attitudes towards learning make a significant contribution to their good achievement. Pupils reach standards which are average in English, mathematics and science. They make good progress from their entry to the school in Year 3, where standards are below those usual for pupils of this age. Very few reach the higher levels at the end of infant school. Standards have improved since the last inspection. This is most marked in mathematics, where they were below average. Most groups of pupils make good progress, but there are occasions when the ablest pupils could extend their learning and reach even higher standards.

The school's leaders have focused on raising standards by maintaining the good quality of teaching and learning. This has proved difficult through an unsettled period of staff absences and shortages, including a period without senior leadership to support the headteacher. These difficulties have now been resolved, but good leadership and management of governors and the headteacher throughout have ensured that the impact has been minimal and that pupils' progress has not been seriously affected. However, during this time, the progress of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities has not been tracked consistently at whole-school level so additional intervention has not always been as prompt as it could have been. The school's senior leadership has strengthened as a result of the restructuring at the start of this school year. The introduction of additional business and administrative support and a new, more effective tracking system are ensuring that senior leaders are able to check the school's work rigorously.

The curriculum is satisfactory. There is good provision for literacy and numeracy, but the development of the broader curriculum is not as well established. There are currently few planned opportunities for pupils to use the skills learnt in numeracy, literacy, and information and communication technology (ICT) in other subjects. The school forms good partnerships with external organisations to enrich the curriculum and to provide additional support for the care and guidance of pupils. The parental response received during the inspection was overwhelmingly positive about all aspects of the school's work.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Provide greater breadth in the curriculum and enable pupils to utilise the key skills learned in core areas across a wide range of subjects and activities.
- Track the progress of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities rigorously and target interventions to ensure consistent progress across the school.

- Include more challenges for higher attaining pupils across the school so that their rate of progress increases.

## **Achievement and standards**

**Grade: 2**

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

**Grade: 2**

Pupils make good gains in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and this enables them to appreciate others and show care and consideration. Older pupils are particularly supportive towards younger ones, as seen when Year 6 pupils act as sports leaders and involve younger ones in playtime activities. This has led to better fitness amongst pupils and greater participation in clubs. Most learners have a good understanding of how to be healthy. The majority comply with the school's advice on healthy snacks and lunches. They are very active at break times and large numbers take up the option of extra sport through clubs. Pupils say they feel safe at school from bullying and racism. When there is the occasional problem, pupils have the confidence to seek help from an adult and know that they will be listened to sympathetically. Pupils behave well and they feel that this is because the yellow and red card system works. Pupils contribute well to the school and local community. There is an active school council which meets frequently and involves pupils in the school's decision making. They decide on which charities to support and a group are currently organising eco-friendly classrooms. Many pupils act as monitors, taking significant responsibility for aspects of school life. Attendance is a focus for improvement in the school. Figures have improved this year on last and the number of pupils who are regularly absent has fallen. Preparation for future economic well-being is satisfactory. Although pupils reach average levels, for a significant number attendance is below average.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

**Grade: 2**

Good relationships between members of the class and positive attitudes are strengths in lessons. Particularly effective is teachers' encouragement of pupils' speaking and listening skills through talking partners. Interactive whiteboards are used well to move pupils at a good pace from one activity to the next, resulting in good concentration and engagement with tasks. Subject knowledge of teachers is good. Clear learning objectives are shared with pupils, and they are given a good understanding of how to check for success. These aspects are revisited throughout lessons, so that pupils are reminded of the focus of their learning.

Mostly, teachers and teaching assistants provide tasks matched well to pupils' stages of learning. However, in a few lessons, work is not always sufficiently challenging for the most able pupils and this affects the extent and pace of their learning. Teachers' regular and constructive marking, together with pupils' increasing involvement in evaluating their own performance as well as that of others, helps learners gain a clear understanding of how to improve.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils' personal development and well-being is at the heart of the curriculum. The personal, social and health education programme is well established and has done much to enhance self-esteem and promote good social behaviour. There is a good emphasis on physical education, swimming and participation in sport. Planning for literacy and numeracy is comprehensive and colleagues work well together to ensure parity of provision across classes. Although the curriculum meets requirements, some subjects are not included as fully as others. Art, music and modern foreign languages have been identified by the school for development. Links between English, mathematics and ICT and other subjects are not yet embedded, resulting in few opportunities for children to practise their reading and writing skills by using them across different subjects.

The curriculum is enriched well with additional features, including after-school and lunchtime clubs. Participation in local projects such as the one with Birmingham Symphony Orchestra extends pupils' understanding of the culturally diverse city in which they live. The Slam Poetry event contributes to their understanding of international issues which affect the global community. There are fewer projects which look at diversity elsewhere in the United Kingdom.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The school has established strong links with parents and external agencies, successfully ensuring that pupils are well cared for and supported. All procedures for ensuring pupils' safety are secure. Rigorous measures are in place aimed at raising attendance, including initiatives celebrating good attendance, but as yet these have met with limited success.

Pupils in need of additional support are identified quickly. The school has a comprehensive range of strategies to meet pupils' needs and has established strong links with parents and external agencies. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is similarly effective, particularly where teaching assistants give support. A newly implemented system for tracking pupils' progress is used consistently and effectively by classroom teachers. However, there have been inconsistencies in tracking the impact of this provision on pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities across the school as a whole. The school has evaluated the causes which are largely to do with staffing difficulties and an action plan is in place to address this. Teachers set clear, challenging targets for pupils, which are highly visible in all classes. Pupils receive good feedback on progress towards these targets. Good links with the feeder infant school and local secondary schools and smooth transfer procedures ease pupils into their next stages of education.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The headteacher and senior staff work very purposefully with governors to improve standards and the school environment. They have been successful. Development plans are clear and reviewed regularly. The school's leadership at different levels has a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses based on regular monitoring of its work. This evaluation leading to improvement indicates the good capacity of the school to improve further. The school recognised

the need for more rigorous tracking of the achievement of different groups. A new system has been implemented so that the school can monitor the impact of its policies and plan more effectively and ensure equality of opportunity. The governing body are well informed and their active involvement in the school helps them to make an effective contribution both in support and in holding the school to account. Governors are particularly effective in linking with parents and have increased the number of parent governors. They are committed and have been successful in involving some previously hard-to-reach parents. The school has effective systems for performance management which embrace all staff and there is a strong emphasis on training linked to this.

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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?	2
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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	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/or disabilities make progress	2

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<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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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
The extent to which 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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	2
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?	2

## 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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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	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**

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Princethorpe Junior School, Birmingham, B29 5QB

Thank you for welcoming us so warmly on our recent visit to your school. We appreciated the warm welcome and all the useful information you gave us about your school.

It is a good school. You make good progress in your work and reach standards which are average by the time you leave. The standards of your work in mathematics have improved most since the school was last inspected.

You develop well in your time at the school. You enjoy school very much, particularly when fully involved in interesting activities. Your attendance is satisfactory but for some of you attendance could be much better. You make a valuable contribution to the community through the school council and by raising money for charity. You understand how to be safe and healthy and we were impressed by how many of you take part in exercise and sport and attend after-school clubs outside school.

All staff care for you well and you look after each other too. We liked, for example, the way older pupils help younger ones by being sports leaders. Many of you are very willing to take on additional responsibilities to help others.

We are asking your headteacher and teachers to make sure that some of you are set work that will give more of a challenge and help you to reach higher levels. We are asking them to look at ways of planning more activities in the curriculum, particularly in some subjects, and at creating more opportunities for you to practise your writing, reading, numeracy and ICT skills in those subjects. The school has introduced a new system to track your progress this year and we would like the school to make sure that the progress of all of you is carefully tracked. I hope you will help your headteacher and her staff to put these plans in place so that the school can continue to improve.

Yours sincerely

Ruth Westbrook Lead inspector