

Princetown Primary

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113261
Local Authority	Devon
Inspection number	325785
Inspection date	10 June 2009
Reporting inspector	George Logan

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	53
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Wendy Watson
Headteacher	Alison Hirst
Date of previous school inspection	1 May 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Princetown Tavistock Road Yelverton PL20 6QE
Telephone number	01822 890245
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Princetown Primary School serves the community of Princetown on Dartmoor. Numbers in each year group vary considerably and the movement of pupils out of and into the school is relatively high. There is Early Years Foundation Stage provision for Reception-aged children. Reception children are taught in the same class as the pupils in Years 1 and 2. The pupils are predominantly White British. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well above average. Many of these have deficits in speech, language and communication. The headteacher joined the school in September 2008.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Princetown School provides a satisfactory education. It has emerging strengths. The school has gained new energy this year. Recent actions have begun to arrest a decline in standards and to strengthen pupils' achievement. There is a strong shared commitment by staff, governors and most parents. Parents value the positive ethos, the commitment to individuals and the good pastoral care. One commented, 'There have been huge improvements since the new head came', while another said, 'Children are treated as individuals because the staff know them so well.' Pupils develop positive attitudes to learning and behave well because of their good personal development. Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay healthy. They enjoy school and make a good contribution to its smooth running through undertaking many jobs which encourage responsibility. Attendance is broadly average.

Children achieve satisfactorily in Reception. Most build steadily upon their limited initial skills. While some aspects of the curriculum are well planned, the lack of a safe, accessible, adequately resourced outdoor learning area restricts opportunities to extend learning and develop independence. Overall provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory, though not all children have reached the expected standards for their age by the start of Year 1. Low numbers, high mobility and the high proportion of pupils with additional learning needs distort performance data. Standards are below average in Year 2 currently, although the weakness in writing in 2008 has been reversed. Pupils now make satisfactory and more consistent progress in Years 3 to 6. They reach broadly average standards by Year 6, other than in writing, where standards are well below average and progress has been insufficient. Able pupils do not always build sufficiently on their previous performance because they are not challenged enough. Teaching is satisfactory, with a comprehensive tracking system now indicating where pupils need to improve. Individual pupil targets ensure that pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of what they need to do next. The curriculum meets the needs of most pupils satisfactorily and they readily support the good range of extra-curricular activities.

The headteacher provides effective leadership, with a clear vision for improvement. Recent innovations include more rigorous target setting, support programmes and the multi-agency Extended School programme. Thorough school self-evaluation provides a clear sense of direction. Middle managers are now developing in their roles, which is why leadership and management are satisfactory overall. Governors are increasingly confident in their monitoring role. The school has satisfactory capacity for further improvement. However, school leaders have not ensured that pupils have a secure understanding of the diversity of people in contemporary Britain and in the global community.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children enter Reception with skills and knowledge levels that are well below those expected for their age, particularly in their speaking, listening and social skills. They settle quickly as a result of the well-structured induction arrangements. Effective teaching and targeted support, and the low numbers, help most children, particularly those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, to make steady progress. They are well cared for and benefit from close relationships with staff. They feel safe and secure, are enthusiastic about learning and behave well. Though still satisfactory, children's progress has improved recently because of better monitoring and more accurate targeting of activities to their individual needs. This ensures that children learn

more rapidly. More effective teaching of the linking of letters and sounds, for example, has supported improvements in reading and writing. However, the outdoor learning space is underdeveloped and does not provide a sufficient range of planned learning opportunities to complement indoor activities. Children are not able to explore freely. They rely heavily on teacher direction and do not develop enough independence. Higher attaining children could be more effectively challenged. By the end of Reception, the majority of children still have skill levels that are below those expected nationally, although they have made satisfactory progress. Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are satisfactory.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that pupils make more consistent and more rapid progress in their learning, particularly in writing and for the more able.
- Provide Reception children with regular free access to well-resourced outdoor learning opportunities which mirror and extend their planned indoor activities.
- Make sure that school leaders and pupils are more actively engaged in developing awareness of the different cultures and communities found nationally and internationally.

A small proportion of 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

Current standards in Year 6 are broadly average in all areas other than writing, where they are well below average. Standards are highest in mathematics and this has been the case for several years. As in the last school year, current Year 6 pupils have achieved satisfactorily since they left Year 2, other than in writing. The decline in science at Year 6 in 2008 has been reversed. Standards in Year 2 are below average, but the number of pupils is very small and, as elsewhere, high mobility and the high proportion of pupils with additional learning needs distort the figures. Here, standards in writing have improved significantly, reflecting recent input to writing skills. This success was, however, counterbalanced by a decline in mathematics. Overall, actions to improve achievement are beginning to have an impact. However, data show that older able pupils in particular do not always build successfully upon their performance at the end of Year 2. This affects overall achievement figures. Pupils with additional learning needs benefit from effective interventions to resolve, for example, weaknesses in speaking and listening, and achieve satisfactorily as a result. The few pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve satisfactorily.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are enthusiastic about school and eagerly support clubs and activities. They are generally considerate of each other, feel secure, have confidence in adults and have few concerns about bullying. There have been no recent exclusions. Pupils' moral, spiritual and social development is satisfactory. Cultural development is a weaker element. Opportunities for involvement with the local community have improved significantly. However, pupils' engagement with the ethnic and cultural diversity of contemporary Britain and globally is limited. Pupils contribute readily to the school community through classroom responsibilities, as playground buddies, and, for some, the school council (although they would like more meetings). Most are confident that

their views are listened to. Pupils' good personal qualities, positive attitudes and broadly satisfactory basic skills provide a sound foundation for their future well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Much of the teaching observed was good. Over time, however, expectations have been inconsistent, leading to erratic achievement. The implementation of a rigorous system for checking pupils' progress has raised teachers' expectations of what pupils could achieve. As a result, pupils' achievement is improving. Planning is detailed, based upon good subject knowledge. Relationships are a strength. Teaching generally motivates pupils well and the environment for learning is well organised in most classes. The marking of pupils' work now provides more guidance for improvement. Many lessons have a good pace which moves learning on well. However, work is not always sufficiently challenging for more able pupils. Older pupils have the chance to record work independently, although other opportunities for independent learning are limited – particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Pupils are increasingly encouraged to evaluate their own work. Teaching assistants are well prepared and support identified pupils effectively.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum for Years 1 to 6 is broad and effectively enhanced by a good range of out-of-class clubs, visits and themed events. The school has undertaken a major curriculum review. This has included an emerging cross-curricular project for outdoor education, in cooperation with Dartmoor National Park. This also supports language development and the promotion of interpersonal skills. There is a satisfactory emphasis on the teaching of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills, both discretely and through other subjects. Good opportunities now exist for writing across the curriculum, for example, in science in Year 6. Over time, progress in numeracy has been more consistent than in literacy. The school will soon implement, with other local schools, an intensive programme for writing. New intensive support programmes in reading, writing and in speech and language are beginning to boost pupils' progress. Practical science activities are developed well. Provision for pupils who need additional support, and the progress they make, is satisfactory overall. Provision for academically able pupils is underdeveloped and not all make the progress of which they are capable.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pastoral care is good. Procedures in relation to child protection, fire prevention and first aid are rigorous. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet current requirements. Staff know individual pupils well and ensure that their welfare needs are met effectively. This contributes strongly to pupils' good personal development. Since September, the school has worked hard, within the Extended Schools remit, to identify services and support from agencies and local providers which will benefit families. Links with external agencies are now good. Academic guidance is satisfactory because the introduction of individual targets is relatively recent. Most pupils have targets in literacy and numeracy and these are beginning to promote better progress.

There are some opportunities for pupils to evaluate their own work. Teachers' marking generally offers appropriate guidance to move learning forward.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The recently appointed headteacher has a clear vision for improvement and has initiated a range of well-judged actions, including a system for checking on pupils' progress. This is contributing to more rapid learning. She has helped her colleagues to develop and their middle management roles are now more securely established. This underpins the shared commitment to improvement among all staff. A rigorous programme of monitoring of teaching and of pupils' work has been implemented. School self-evaluation accurately identifies strengths, weaknesses and areas for development. Current published targets do not fully reflect the context of a Year 6 class which has absorbed several newcomers. Governance is satisfactory. Governors are very committed and are increasingly ready to hold the school to account and to contribute to strategic planning. However, other than in the local context, the school has not adequately explored issues around developing pupils' understanding of the diversity of people living in the national or international context. There has been limited action to promote national or international awareness. As a result, this aspect is inadequate.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	3
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ 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/or disabilities make progress	3

¹Grade 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

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

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of 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?	2

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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 eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	4
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

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

11 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Princetown Primary School, Yelverton PL20 6QE

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed meeting you and spending time in your lessons. We found that your school, while satisfactory overall, has a number of strengths.

- The main things that we found are these:
- You behave well and generally work hard. Most of you attend regularly.
- Standards vary quite a bit because there are so few of you in each year. At present, standards in Year 6 are average in mathematics and reading, but are below average in writing.
- While much of the teaching we saw was good and teachers are enthusiastic, some of you find the work quite easy and could learn at a faster rate. Teachers now make much better use of the information they have about your progress.
- Class 3 provides satisfactorily for the youngest children. The outdoor provision could be developed further.
- The school makes sure that you are cared for well. You conduct yourselves safely and you are aware of how important it is to eat healthily.
- The curriculum is satisfactory, with a growing range of out-of-school activities, but you have few opportunities to learn about the world beyond your village.
- Those in charge of the school make sure that it runs smoothly.

We are asking the school to make these changes so that you do even better:

- Ensure that you make more rapid progress so that standards in writing are raised, particularly for those who learn quickly.
- Improve the quality of outdoor learning for the Reception children in Class 3.
- Ensure that school leaders have a clear plan for ensuring that you can learn about life in the many different communities in the UK and overseas.

You can help by continuing to work hard and do your best. We hope that you will have every success in the future.

Yours faithfully

■ George Logan

Lead Inspector