

Princefield First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124173
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	328071
Inspection date	9 December 2008
Reporting inspector	Barbara Crane

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	First
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	229
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	Sharon Mason
Headteacher	Christine Lord
Date of previous school inspection	16 November 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Saxon Road Penkridge Stafford ST19 5EP
Telephone number	01785 714050
Fax number	01785 714050

Age group	3–9
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors. The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: pupils' achievement in writing, and the quality of the curriculum.

Evidence was gathered from observing lessons and looking at pupils' work, performance data, parents' questionnaires and the school's documentation, as well as from discussions with pupils, staff and governors. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

The school draws its pupils mainly from the village of Penkridge and pupils leave at the end of Year 4. Most children who start in the Reception Year have previously attended the school's Nursery. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is lower than average, as is the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There are few pupils from minority ethnic groups. A small number of pupils are learning English as an additional language.

A private provider uses the school's facilities for an after-school club on three days each week.

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. Pupils are well prepared for the future and their personal development and well-being are nurtured in a welcoming environment. They rightly feel that the staff give them a good level of care. Warm relationships between adults and pupils add greatly to pupils' feeling of security. Pupils say that there is always someone on hand to talk to if they have difficulties. Parents express confidence in the school. The following comment from a parent reflected the view held by many: 'The school is a close-knit community where the children and staff are friendly.' All of these factors combine to support pupils' excellent enjoyment of school and their good attendance.

Good teaching ensures pupils' good achievement. Teachers keep pupils interested through lively activities and practical work. Good questions keep pupils alert and they air their views confidently because teachers are interested in what they have to say. Lessons are well organised, with a stimulating rhythm of activities so that pupils maintain their level of concentration. Teachers use ICT (information and communication technology) very effectively to make learning fun and interactive. The school's good systems for tracking pupils' progress are used well to pinpoint any who are falling behind, and there is swift and effective intervention to support pupils' progress. There is effective support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and so these pupils make good progress. Advice from outside agencies is used well to inform teaching. The needs of pupils who are learning English as an additional language are carefully considered and planned for to ensure their good progress.

When children enter the Nursery, their attainment is broadly at the level expected and their good progress through the Nursery and Reception classes means that standards are above average by the time they start in Year 1. Good progress is also made in the following years. Standards are above average by the end of Year 2 and Year 4 in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils make particularly rapid progress in mathematics because of their logical approach to solving problems and careful consideration of the process for calculation. While pupils mostly make good progress in writing, there are times when teaching does not provide exactly the right starting point in activities to meet different pupils' needs. All pupils have targets to aim for but teachers' marking does not provide consistently helpful guidance for pupils to reach them. An additional factor affecting pupils' progress is that there are too few opportunities for them to use their skills in writing across the curriculum.

Pupils of all ages and backgrounds enjoy good relationships. They are considerate and thoughtful and know how to keep themselves and others safe. Their behaviour is good and often exemplary in classrooms. The emphasis placed on promoting healthy lifestyles is reflected in pupils' excellent understanding of the importance of good nutrition, and they eat healthy snacks and drink plenty of water during the day. Pupils say that the school meals are 'very tasty' and enjoy sampling food from different cultures. Pupils are active and the extra activities in sport are very popular with pupils. Pupils contribute well to the school and the wider community. The school council effectively gathers pupils' views about areas for improvement. Representatives visited other schools to assess play equipment before deciding on suitable purchases, and these have proved very popular. The eco-group organise recycling and the growing of vegetables. The buddy system works well in resolving any problems encountered on the playground. Pupils are proud of the part that they play in supporting the community through concerts and festivals. Their understanding of different cultures and religions is promoted well through a good range

of visitors and visits. They raise considerable funds for charities working in Africa and Europe to promote the independence of communities.

Pupils take full advantage of the very wide range of extra activities, including sport, music, modern foreign languages and dance, which enhance the curriculum. The Year 4 pupils are eagerly anticipating their residential visit to an outdoor activity centre later in the school year.

Good leadership and management have meant that the school has improved well from its previous inspection. Standards have been rising over the past three years and continue to do so. Community cohesion is promoted well. The headteacher's determination to get the best for pupils infuses every aspect of the school's work. The staff are fully in tune with her aspirations and so the school achieves its targets for improvement. This is clearly evident in the success of the work the staff have carried out to raise pupils' standards in mathematics. Accurate self-evaluation arises from good checks on the school's performance. The headteacher provides an excellent lead in this and other managers and the governors are quickly developing skills to support planning for school improvement.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Leadership and management of the provision are good. Good attention is given to children's welfare. Parents are full of praise for the induction procedures that ensure that children settle in happily, make friends and gain confidence. The indoor areas are bright and stimulating and children are eager to start work. There is a good balance of activities between those directed by adults and those that children choose for themselves. Good teaching makes effective use of assessments to adapt activities to children's developing needs. Consequently, children achieve well and develop positive attitudes to learning. Children start in Nursery with attainment that is broadly as expected, although the school has identified particularly low attainment in problem solving, reasoning and numeracy in recent years. Children make good progress in all areas of learning and so standards are above average by the end of Reception. The range of activities planned for children in the Nursery and Reception classes is restricted because facilities for outdoor learning are limited. Plans are in hand to develop these areas for both age groups.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the guidance given to pupils about what they need to work on in their writing, and provide more opportunities for them to write across the curriculum.
- Improve opportunities and facilities for learning outdoors for children in the Nursery and Reception classes.

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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

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
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?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
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

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	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
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	2

The quality of provision

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

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 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**

10 December 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Princefield First School, Penkridge ST19 5EP

Thank you for welcoming me and Mr Shears and being so friendly and helpful when we visited your school. We were not surprised that you enjoy Princefield so much because you go to a good school. It is giving you a good start to your education.

You are all helping to make your school such a happy place by behaving well and getting on together. You told us that you feel safe in school and can talk to adults if you have any problems. This is because the adults care about you and want the best for you, right from the start. We were really pleased to see how much you know about keeping healthy and fit. You care for the environment and play a good part in helping your community and helping other people. It is good that you know how to keep yourselves and other people safe.

You make good progress in your work because of good teaching. Your work in mathematics is especially good. Well done to everybody! There are plenty of interesting things to do in the curriculum, as well as all the extra clubs.

The people in charge of your school run it well and everyone is working hard to make things even better for you. To help, we have asked them to do these two things.

- Show you what you need to work on in your writing and give you more opportunities to write in different subjects.
- Improve the facilities for learning outdoors for children in the Nursery and Reception classes.

Please keep working hard and enjoying your time at Princefield. We wish you all the best for the future.

Yours faithfully

Barbara Crane

Lead inspector