

# Princes School

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	104750
<b>Local Authority</b>	Liverpool
<b>Inspection number</b>	336359
<b>Inspection dates</b>	24–25 February 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Linda Clare

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

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	87
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Dr Peter Hawkins
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Kathy Brent
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	23 May 2007
<b>School address</b>	Selborne Street Liverpool Merseyside L8 1YQ
<b>Telephone number</b>	0151 7092602
<b>Fax number</b>	0151 7092627
<b>Email address</b>	princes-ht@princes.liverpool.sch.uk

---

<b>Age group</b>	2–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	24–25 February 2010
<b>Inspection number</b>	336359

---

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 08456 404045, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

Royal Exchange Buildings  
St Ann's Square  
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)

W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2010

## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Approximately half of the time was spent observing lessons of which 10 were seen, involving 10 teachers. Meetings were held with governors, staff, groups of pupils, and partners from other organisations. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a wide range of documents including data on pupils' progress, teachers' planning, curriculum documents, pupils' files, the school's self-evaluation, and 29 parental questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the accuracy of the school's evaluation of pupils' progress
- whether the revision of the curriculum has ensured all pupil needs are met
- whether the school makes good use of the information gathered from its monitoring and evaluation to bring about improvements
- how well the school promotes community cohesion.

## Information about the school

Princes School is a special school providing education for pupils with severe and complex learning difficulties and those with an autistic spectrum disorder. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs and boys outnumber girls by two to one. Most pupils are of a White British heritage, with much smaller numbers from other ethnic backgrounds. Most pupils come from the Liverpool area. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above the national average. A very small minority are looked after by a local authority. The school provides an outreach service to mainstream schools to support pupils with autistic spectrum disorders.

The school has gained Basic Skills Award 2 and the Healthy Schools Award. It has also achieved Financial Management Standard in Schools.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

Princes School provides a good quality of education and an outstanding level of care for its pupils. Parents and carers hold the school in high regard and are fulsome in their praise for the total commitment given by all staff to creating a warm and welcoming environment in which their children thrive. They particularly value the support and encouragement their children receive. One parent summed up the response of many saying, 'The school is a special place which enriches his and our lives.' Pupils make outstanding progress in their personal development. They are happy, confident and gain a great deal of enjoyment from all that the school has to offer.

Although standards are low owing to the nature of pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities, pupils make good progress in their learning from their individual starting points. Good teaching and carefully tailored programmes enable pupils to meet their targets. Communication skills develop particularly well. Teachers provide constant encouragement for pupils to practise their skills. Consequently, by the time pupils leave school, those who communicate verbally are eager to talk to visitors. Lessons are well structured and capture pupils' interest. Medical and therapy needs are skilfully incorporated into lessons by teachers and support staff. Sometimes teaching is less effective because work does not build successfully on pupils' knowledge and is not sufficiently challenging, particularly for pupils of higher ability.

Themed work and information and communication technology are particular strengths of a curriculum designed with much flexibility. It caters well for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders. Pupils feel safe, secure and valued in school. Behaviour is good and pupils have total confidence that staff will resolve any problems for them. Response to the school's promotion of healthy lifestyles is outstanding and in relation to their capabilities pupils make an excellent contribution to the school and the local community. Extensive links with other schools, businesses, colleges and local groups help to make learning more relevant to everyday life.

The key factor to the school's good progress has been the dynamic leadership of the headteacher. High morale is evident and the whole school community is working towards the vision and goals for the school. The school is accurate in its self-evaluation. New systems to secure good teaching and learning are embedding well, and work to further develop the assessment system has started, demonstrating the school's awareness of what it needs to accomplish for future improvement. The school has met the challenge of providing good quality provision for the very few children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The commitment of governors and all staff to build on these improvements shows the school has good capacity to improve further.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Monitor teaching and the use of assessment more closely to ensure that pupils make even better progress by consistently:
  - using data to inform planning and target-setting in all lessons
  - ensuring that work set engages and challenges all pupils, particularly higher ability pupils
  - using the school's assessment systems to regularly analyse progress.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**2**

Pupils report that they learn, 'a lot'. Pupils show great enthusiasm when they master a skill and their pleasure in achievement can be readily seen in the classroom. They are encouraged to try new experiences and take part in activities which allow them to move around the classroom such as the name game at the end of the 'hello' session. In this lesson, pupils had to follow instructions to physically touch the big screen for their name to appear, music played and the screen burst into colourful patterns. One pupil was so excited that he had learned how to make the computer come alive that he wanted to press the screen for everyone else. Many enter the school towards the end of Key Stage 1 having attended assessment centres or other schools. The majority of pupils make excellent gains in personal and communication skills as they move through the school. These skills facilitate their good progress in literacy and numeracy. As a result of greater stability, effective teaching and growing confidence pupils make stronger progress in basic skills at Key Stage 2. Boys and girls make equally good progress, regardless of their learning difficulties or ethnicity whilst moving forward in steps of varying sizes. The small number of pupils in the care of the local authority makes gains at the levels of others in their groups.

Pupils use information and communication technology confidently and effectively to communicate their ideas. The school has good procedures to identify the ways in which pupils learn best and while some may learn to write simple sentences, others use symbols or Makaton signing.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils are very respectful of each others' needs and difficulties, and have a good understanding of right and wrong appropriate to their own abilities. Most show willingness to improve their health and many participate in lunchtime activities such as yoga. Pupil participation in school life is outstanding. Elected school council members take responsibilities seriously, from interviewing headteacher candidates to purchasing bicycles for outdoor play. Pupils engage enthusiastically in a wide range of artistic, sporting and cultural opportunities including wheelchair basketball and cheerleading. The school is very well regarded in the local area and recently won an award for 'making a difference' in their community for helping other schools become more eco-friendly. Pupils adhere to routines very well, show good cooperation and follow instructions to the best of their ability. They make excellent progress in developing self-confidence and independence skills. These

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

attributes, together with their good progress in basic skills, prepare them for the future very well.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	*
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective is the provision?

The good progress that pupils make is a reflection of good teaching. Staff teams work closely together and have a very good understanding of pupils' needs. In the best lessons, the pace is brisk with effective questioning and regular changes of task. Imaginative use of resources is a feature of teaching and staff 'go the extra mile' to provide tangible examples to aid pupil understanding. For example, in one lesson an orange with its stalk and leaves still attached was sought to show pupils how oranges grow. Communication skills are promoted very effectively and a high level of sensitivity to pupils' feelings and needs is evident. Pupils enjoy the creative arts and musical rhymes that reinforce their learning. Learning objectives are emphasized in appropriate

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

\* In some special schools inspectors do not make a judgement about attainment in relation to expectations of the pupils' age.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

language and checked at the end of each lesson. The information gained is sometimes not evaluated sufficiently or quickly enough to provide the pupil's next step. Occasionally, teaching is less effective as a result because work set does not stretch pupils to make as much progress as they could.

The revised curriculum is well-managed, flexible, and carefully planned to meet all needs. Learning opportunities match pupil age and stage of development effectively. Cross-curricular provision is well embedded through planned topic work and interactive opportunities make learning fun. A variety of practical, multi-sensory and investigative play experiences promote learning effectively for younger pupils. Opportunities for pupils to interact with the wider community enrich the curriculum particularly well.

Support provided for pupils as they change classes and move up the school is a major strength of the outstanding care provision. Work with multi-agency partners in dedicated 'Team around the child' meetings ensures that individual needs of pupils are exceptionally well met. Staff defuse any challenging behaviour very effectively. Lunchtime is used to promote social skills and healthy lifestyles because all, including kitchen and lunchtime staff, know pupils well. Excellent arrangements are in place to support families and signpost links to appropriate services.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

Appointed in 2008, the headteacher has injected new vitality into the school. She and her senior team are committed and positive leaders who seek continuously to improve the school. High expectation and enthusiasm to drive the school forward promote very good responses from staff. Their views are sought and valued. Teachers feel encouraged to extend their professional skills, subject leaders are becoming effective middle managers and teamwork is especially strong.

Target-setting is realistic and school self-evaluation is good overall. The school is developing greater depth in the scope, frequency and analysis of its monitoring. More regular use of assessment information would contribute to this development. Broader development planning focuses on improving a small number of the school's key aspects. Sharing school expertise in teaching pupils with an autistic spectrum disorder and achieving National Autistic Society accreditation are appropriately prioritised. Governors provide effective support and good challenge. They have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. At the centre of the school's success

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

is its close partnership with parents and carers who benefit from innovative 'therapy days'. These provide a clinic environment of multi-agency support open to all. Outstanding partnerships promote music, enterprise and cultural activities, which have significant impact on pupils' social skills and cultural understanding. The school tackles equality of opportunity well and is proactive in ensuring that there is no discrimination in school. Pupils develop good tolerance and understanding of the needs of others as a result.

Safeguarding procedures, including risk assessments are good and there is a high level of trust in the school and its staff. Health and safety is monitored, and sessions to raise awareness are planned to include methods to minimize cross-infection.

Involvement in local learning networks and multi-cultural projects prepare pupils very well for life in a diverse society. The school values all pupils as individuals and through the curriculum and local and extended links plans carefully to promote community cohesion. The school provides good value for money.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## **Early Years Foundation Stage**

The small number of children that the school has in the Early Years Foundation Stage is integrated well into a class of slightly older pupils with similar levels of learning need. Parental involvement in learning is valued. Good procedures for children starting school and home visits help them to settle in quickly. Children make good progress in lessons and enjoy their activities. Staff are developing the areas of learning and widening the curriculum. The outdoor curriculum has been developed to further enhance the school's



**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

provision. The staff know children and their needs well and make every effort to ensure that they receive a full range of opportunities appropriate for their age. Robust safeguarding procedures and good quality documentation are securely in place. This stage of education is well managed in the same way as the rest of the school.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

## Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about Princes School. The school maintains close contact with parents and actively includes their views in its development planning. Under half of the parents responded to the questionnaire. No negative views were expressed and many contained appreciative comments which recognise and value the high level of care and support provided by the school. The inspection evidence also supports this view as several of the learner outcomes were found to be outstanding and the school's partnership work with parents and carers is excellent.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Princes School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 29 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 87 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	24	83	5	17	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	24	83	3	10	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	25	86	4	14	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	21	72	8	28	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	25	86	4	14	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	23	79	4	14	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	16	55	11	38	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	16	55	12	41	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	21	72	6	21	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	19	66	8	28	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	23	79	6	21	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	24	83	5	17	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	27	93	2	7	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



26 February 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Princes School, Liverpool, L8 1YQ

I am writing to say a very big 'Thank you' for making us feel so welcome when we visited your school and to tell you what we found out. Your parents and carers think that Princes is a good school and I agree with them. The people who help you really care about you and everyone in school looks after you very well and keeps you safe. I was very impressed by how keen you are to learn, your good attendance and how much you enjoy your lessons. The teaching in your school is good and there are so many different activities for you to do. You make good progress in your work because your teachers and support staff know how to help you to do your best and they make learning interesting and fun. I really enjoyed the 'Days of the week' song in one class and could see that the pupils there did too. You are very considerate towards one another and it was good to see that you like to help when you can. Your school is very good at giving you the chance to mix with people from other schools and take part in visits and activities outside school.

Your school is good because your headteacher and the other managers are good leaders and they are always trying to make the school better for you. I have asked them to check that each lesson you go to improves how much you know, and to make sure that your work is not too hard or too easy for you. I have also asked them to make sure that they check regularly how different groups are getting on. You could help your teachers by letting them know if work is too easy or too hard for you.

I am delighted that you have such a good school to go to which you enjoy so much. I hope that you continue to take pride in your school and keep trying hard.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Linda Clare

Lead inspector

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 08456 404045, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).**