

Prince Rock Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113344
Local Authority	Plymouth
Inspection number	338148
Inspection dates	17–18 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Martin Kerly

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	190
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Carol Bull
Headteacher	Simon Spry
Date of previous school inspection	18 January 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 17 lessons and 10 teachers during the two days, and held meetings with groups of pupils, the chair of governors and staff. They also observed the school's work and looked at a range of school documents including records of pupils' progress and other monitoring activities, school policies and guidelines, teachers' plans and questionnaires received from pupils, staff and 81 parents and carers.

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

- progress in writing by pupils, especially in Key Stage 2
- the impact of school strategies to improve attendance
- consistency in the quality of teaching and the balance between satisfactory, good and outstanding practice across the three age phases
- elements of outstanding performance by pupils and the provision that might promote this.

Information about the school

The school is a little smaller than average. The number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is almost double the national average. These pupils' needs are wide ranging, including learning difficulties mainly related to speech and language, emotional and behavioural issues and physical disabilities. A higher than average number of pupils join or leave the school other than at the usual points, when aged 4 and 11. A small number of pupils speak English as an additional language. The school has a number of awards including International School, Healthy School, Activemark and Artsmark. The governors provide a breakfast club and an after-school club on site. The Bright Stars pre-school, also on site, is not managed by this school's governing body and so is not reported upon here.

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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

This is an outstanding school. Everything about it keeps getting better and better and the pupils benefit from a stunning range of high quality experiences. The headteacher is an inspiring leader who motivates all around him to excel at what they do. He provides the opportunities and means for them to do it. Pupils are very proud of their achievements and their school. They become exceptionally responsible by the time they leave. Their behaviour is exemplary. The entire staff team provides outstanding care, guidance and support for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. These outstanding features are appreciated almost unanimously by the large group of parents and carers who responded to the inspectors' questionnaire. One hundred per cent agreed that their children enjoy school. Comments such as 'My child receives an excellent level of care' and 'My son has come on leaps and bounds at this school' are typical of those received.

Pupils make excellent progress from low starting points. Attainment has been rising year on year, and pupils are now attaining above average levels by the end of Year 6, especially in reading, mathematics and science. Attainment and progress in writing, although good, is not as strong or consistent as in other areas, particularly within Key Stage 2. Teaching is excellent and the range of experiences and opportunities provided by teachers is quite superb. It inspires the pupils to perform as well as they possibly can. The school serves its local community exceptionally well, offering a focal point and supporting those in need of help. It also works effectively to promote links globally. The school has a few links with communities around the country but recognises the need to extend and strengthen these in order to provide pupils with an even better understanding of communities beyond Prince Rock.

The headteacher is supported very well by other senior leaders and the entire staff team. Together they conduct detailed and frequent checks on all aspects of the school's work. From these thorough checks they have established a very accurate view of the school's performance, have moved decisively to make improvements where needed, such as improving attendance, and engage the whole staff in carrying out plans to make further improvements. The school's capacity to improve is excellent because it is exceptionally well placed to maintain its many outstanding features and strengthen them still further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By September 2010, ensure the level of challenge in writing in all classes across Key Stage 2 is closely matched to the pupils' different needs and more able pupils in

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particular are consistently fully extended by their written work.

- Provide systematic ways for pupils to interact with and gain a strong understanding of communities across Britain beyond the local neighbourhood.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**1**

Pupils' achievement and their enjoyment of school life are outstanding. Pupils learn a great deal every day and make excellent progress in the majority of classes and lessons. Many begin school with attainment significantly below national expectations. For three years, boys' and girls' attainment has been rising in national tests at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Last year, for the first time, attainment at the end of Year 2 was above average, especially in reading, and in Year 6 in science. This year this rising trend is continuing. It is clear from lessons, pupils' books and the school's assessments, that above average attainment is increasing. Pupils in Year 6, many of whom have already made a year's progress in just six months, are working at above average levels, especially in reading, mathematics and science. Throughout the school pupils are on track to attain their challenging end-of-year targets and are very positive about their learning and how they can improve. In a few lessons, progress in writing is not as rapid as elsewhere. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, many of whom have joined the school other than in the Early Years Foundation Stage, respond quickly and well to the high quality intensive support received from teachers and teaching assistants. Additional help, provided in small groups and sometimes individually, enables many of these pupils to make excellent progress, albeit often from exceptionally low starting points. Despite their excellent progress, the presence of this large group of pupils with special needs does reduce the overall attainment data for the school.

Almost all aspects of pupils' personal development are outstanding. High levels of self-esteem and lots of smiles and welcoming comments are to be found throughout the school. In addition to the exemplary behaviour in lessons, pupils are exceptionally sensible and caring towards one another in the busy playground area and when moving around the large school building. The overwhelming majority of pupils feel totally safe in school, and recognise the high levels of care they receive. Pupils are very clear about taking exercise and eating healthily. This is reflected in the Healthy School and Activemark awards. Pupils enthusiastically lead and participate in the daily wake-and-shake sessions alongside staff and the headteacher. Those attending breakfast club enjoy a nutritious breakfast. Pupils make a very significant contribution to their community in school and beyond. They conscientiously take on a wide range of roles, including those as eco-warriors, school councillors, peer mediators, office reception staff at lunchtimes, charity fundraisers and workers on the community allotment. Attendance rates, currently broadly average, are improving rapidly in response to some vigorous actions and support techniques taken by the school and external authorities. The school has detailed action plans designed to sustain this improvement. Pupils are well prepared with the skills needed for the next stage of education and adult life, particularly in relation to their very positive attitudes to learning, collaborative skills and general resilience and resourcefulness.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

There are three key factors in the excellent teaching and learning. These are inspirational teaching, a most imaginative and stimulating curriculum and a highly effective and well-coordinated approach towards helping pupils take responsibility for their learning through the 'building learning power' initiative. Outstanding teaching was seen in the majority of classes and lessons observed. Teaching was at least good in all classes. The teachers use innovative ways to inspire the pupils. Examples include dressing up as a pirate, learning to become a juggler and appearing to receive a surprise email from Africa during an English lesson. This email contained instructions on how to make a model and effectively supported a lesson about writing instructions. Teachers frequently make very good use of computers to present stimulating visual images. They regularly plan activities that link across the curriculum and find ways of making the learning seem purposeful and relevant. They involve the pupils in thinking through their learning, frequently making use of talking partners for this. In a Year 2 art lesson, pupils gave sensitive but critical feedback, including 'two stars and a wish', to their peers about their decorated African masks. Teachers provide very detailed

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

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guidance and feedback about academic learning and the pupils' personal efforts and qualities when formally marking work. An example seen was, 'You were a great leader today and responsible for guiding a lot of your group's thinking. Well done.' In the inspectors' questionnaire, 100% of the pupils agree that teachers explain how to improve their work. In just a few writing lessons and as seen in pupils' books examined in Key Stage 2, the tasks are not always sufficiently differentiated to match the precise needs of each group. Occasionally, the more able pupils are not challenged enough to stimulate the rapid progress of which they are capable. The focus in the curriculum on pupils' personal, social and emotional development is very strong. The school takes full advantage of the numerous additional rooms in the building, for example the two large halls, the designated art room, exceptionally large computer suite and library and numerous smaller rooms, to provide additional experiences for all and support for individuals and small groups.

The extensive team of assistants and other support workers are well trained and highly skilled. They work very effectively in the classroom alongside teachers. They often lead sessions in different rooms for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who might be regarded as vulnerable. One pupil wrote to the inspectors, 'I think all the staff put a lot of effort into our work, so we will be encouraged to want to learn more.' The curriculum is exceptionally well adapted for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. There are also good opportunities provided for the gifted and talented pupils, especially in relation to special external events. All aspects of care, guidance and support are of high quality, from arrival in the morning to the after-school club at the end of the day. This is recognised by 99% of the pupils in the questionnaire, with several adding comments such as, 'When I have a problem they support me and take care of me.' The school has worked sensitively and constructively with the parents and carers of persistent absentees, dramatically reducing the number of these. It continues to be innovative through, for example, the individually tailored route of the walking bus, going out of its way to encourage pupils to join in and thereby improve their attendance.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher leads by example and sets a brisk pace and high expectations for all in connection with the school. His clarity of vision, absolute commitment to provide the

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very best for the pupils and innovative ways to obtain resources combine to provide a clear brief for colleagues and ensure success for the pupils. One hundred per cent of the pupils replying to the questionnaire agree that the headteacher and senior staff are doing a good job. One pupil, unprompted, said, 'He is the best headteacher in the world.' The whole school exudes pride, joy and a strong sense of self-belief. The senior leadership team comprises of exemplary teachers who work very effectively, both collectively and individually. There is an exceptionally strong level of commitment from the entire staff team, all of those replying to the inspectors' questionnaire reporting that they feel proud to be a member of the school, that their contribution is valued and they feel fully involved. The school has excellent systems for tracking pupils' progress and monitoring its own performance. It is very tough on itself and there is a tangible determination to continuously improve, but within a creative and enlightening manner. These characteristics reflect the school's outstanding capacity to sustain all the established improvements and build further on them.

Additional funding is obtained from various sources and used very effectively to meet the needs of the pupils, for example by creating additional posts to support specific groups and individuals. Every individual, adult and pupil is valued equally and the school does not tolerate any form of discrimination. The school has excellent partnerships with external professionals and organisations in order to promote the well-being of those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school has reflected thoughtfully on the needs of its community and how it can help promote community cohesion. It provides support by being the venue for many community events and a focal point to promote a sharing of ideas and actions. Although it has established strong global links, particularly in Africa, the school recognises that at present more could be achieved to promote community cohesion at a national level and plans to address this. Governance has been strengthened and is good. Governors fulfil their legal responsibilities, are frequent visitors to the school and have a good understanding of how it operates. Their safeguarding policies are all in place, there is substantial ongoing staff training and the school implements the safeguarding policies extremely vigilantly.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1

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The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Very carefully tailored induction arrangements enable the children to settle in quickly and calmly. This excellent focus on children's welfare and the partnership with parents and carers is maintained throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage. The attainment on entry is significantly below national expectations for children of this age, with the very large majority being below and few being in line or above. Children make excellent progress through the year from their low starting points. Nevertheless, very few exceed the expected learning goals by the end of the year, and many do not reach them, especially in early reading and writing skills. Provision indoors is excellent. The teacher and assistants make good use of the extensive internal accommodation during the school day, setting up an absorbing and stimulating range of experiences for the children to explore and use for play. An excellent example of learning related to the pirate day, when children dressed as pirates. They were inspired by finding 'lost' coins, drawing and exploring treasure maps and going on a daring treasure hunt. Adults systematically observe and record children's responses and learning. They frequently extend the learning by sensitively asking probing or open-ended questions in order to extend the children's language and ideas further. Good use is made of the designated, secure but fairly small outdoor area, although the absence of an all-weather canopy or shelter restricts the opportunities for children to move freely in and out of doors and limits the range of activities that can be set up outside. The school has advanced plans for a canopy, with funding already set aside, and is working to provide this shelter so as to improve the outdoor provision.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

A significant proportion of parents and carers replied to the inspectors' questionnaire. The replies show their strong and overwhelming support for all aspects of the school's

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work, unanimously regarding enjoyment and keeping children safe. This is quite an exceptional level of support. There is no pattern within the very small minority that expressed concerns and inspectors fully agree with the parents' and carers' overwhelmingly positive views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Prince Rock Primary 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 81 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 189 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	57	70	24	30	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	61	75	20	25	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	56	69	22	27	2	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	50	62	27	33	3	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	59	73	20	25	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	59	73	20	25	1	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	51	63	28	35	1	1	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)	41	51	35	43	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	47	58	30	37	2	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	43	53	34	42	2	2	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	42	52	31	28	5	6	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	52	64	26	32	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	60	74	19	23	1	1	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"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



24 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Prince Rock Primary School, Plymouth PL4 9JF

Thank you for helping us and making us exceptionally welcome when we visited your school. We thoroughly enjoyed talking to you and seeing some of your work. Some of you told us yours is a 'brilliant school'. We agree and so do your parents. It is an outstanding school and a very special place for you all. We are particularly impressed by the way you take pride in your achievements, the ways you contribute to the school, care for one another and look after yourselves. Many of you help out around school such as by being eco-warriors, school councillors, peer mediators, or office receptionists and by helping charity fundraising and working on the community allotment. Wherever we went we kept seeing lots of happy faces, for example in the wake-and-shake sessions in the hall each morning, or when your teachers dressed up as pirates or a wizard. We are not surprised that most of you attend nearly every day. The school has worked exceptionally well with your parents and carers and other experts to ensure those few of you who were frequently absent attend more often these days.

All the staff work as a team to keep you safe and to give you lots of opportunities. Your teachers think of very interesting things for you to do. They are particularly good at helping you to think about your learning and how to improve. They and the teaching assistants and other staff work very hard to help those of you who find some of your work difficult or have problems from time to time. Your behaviour is outstanding. In lessons you make excellent progress and the standards of your work are higher than they have ever been in Prince Rock. Well done!

The headteacher and other leaders do a great job and have made many improvements around the school. We have asked them to work on two things to make it even better.

- Help those of you in Key Stage 2 make even more progress with your writing by ensuring teachers always give you work that is not too hard or too easy and that those of you who find writing easy are given even greater challenges.
- Provide more opportunities for you to get to know about different communities across Britain.

You can help by continuing to work hard, especially with your writing, and making sure you attend school as often as possible.

Yours sincerely

Martin Kerly

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