

Princetown Community Primary School

Princetown, Tavistock Road, Yelverton, Devon PL20 6QE

Inspection dates

18–19 June 2019

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Since the previous inspection, pupils' achievement has significantly improved. In particular, current pupils, including the disadvantaged, are making strong progress in reading and mathematics from their starting points.
- Effective partnership with the An Daras Multi-Academy Trust has strengthened leadership at all levels within the school. Leaders know their school well and have high expectations and ambitions for pupils. They have brought about improvements to attendance and have overseen rapid improvements in behaviour across the school.
- Leaders and governors have successfully implemented an effective programme of training and development. Developments in the quality of teaching have improved learning, most notably in reading and mathematics.
- The teaching of phonics is good. Pupils are confident to use and apply their knowledge when reading and writing unknown words.
- Mathematics teaching is highly effective and develops pupils' arithmetic skills and reasoning abilities. Teachers typically make effective use of well-researched resources.
- Teachers use the broad and balanced curriculum effectively to plan a wide range of activities that engage pupils' interests and help them make good progress.
- Children get a good start to their education in the Reception Year. Effective teaching means that children, including the most disadvantaged, make strong progress from their starting points.
- Leaders have established a strong culture of safeguarding. As a result, pupils feel safe and well cared for.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are making variable progress in writing. Often, these pupils find it difficult to learn because tasks are not closely matched to their needs.
- Leaders' monitoring is not sufficiently focused on evaluating the impact of teaching, learning and assessment on the progress of pupils with SEND.
- A legacy of weakness in writing skills, combined with a variability in teachers' expectations, limits pupils' progress, including that of the most able, in writing, legibility and presentation.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve standards in writing across the school by ensuring that:
 - the teaching of writing considers pupils' starting points, especially for pupils with SEND
 - teachers have sufficiently high expectations of the quality and presentation of pupils' writing across the school, including for the most able and the disadvantaged.
- Improve outcomes for pupils by ensuring that leaders and managers:
 - provide staff with the training they need to accurately assess and plan activities for pupils with SEND
 - make frequent checks of workbooks, to make sure that pupils, including those with SEND, take greater pride in the presentation of their work, especially in improving the legibility of their handwriting.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The management partnership with the An Daras Multi-Academy Trust has been instrumental in helping the school to move forward. It provides regular challenge to senior leaders and governors. The head of school has established a clear vision for improvement and set high standards for all pupils. Well-focused teamwork has secured good leadership, teaching and pupils' achievement. As a result, pupils' outcomes continue to rise.
- Leaders make good use of opportunities provided by the local authority and national teaching schools to continue to improve the school. This includes support with the training and coaching of staff to improve the impact of middle leaders. Consequently, English and mathematics leaders are outward looking and are keen to learn from the most up-to-date research.
- Leaders, including governors, have an accurate and precise knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They use regular checks on the quality of teaching and pupils' progress to ensure that their actions are making a positive difference. Leaders adapted the whole-school approach to the teaching of mathematics. Inspection evidence shows that this is having a positive effect on improving the quality of pupils' reasoning and problem-solving skills.
- The school's curriculum provides pupils with opportunities to gain a breadth of knowledge and skills through a range of topics. Pupils find these topics, for example 'The Egyptians' and 'Rainforests', interesting, and they are keen to share their learning. Key stage 2 pupils' learning in science is particularly inspiring, because teachers provide regular opportunities to conduct high-quality investigations and experiments.
- The leader for special educational needs has made a significant impact on the care provided for pupils with SEND. She has rapidly identified pupils' specific needs and provided a range of tailored support, including speech and language therapy. However, leaders have identified that some staff would benefit from specific training, in order to improve the planning for, and assessment of, pupils with SEND.
- Leaders make effective use of additional funding to provide appropriate support for the disadvantaged pupils. Teachers provide effective and personalised support for individuals who need to catch up. Consequently, disadvantaged pupils make strong progress from their starting points, especially in reading and mathematics.
- Pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain. For example, they learn about democracy through the school council. In religious education, they learn to respect others who have different faiths and views. An example of this includes the Christianity project, to contrast with pupils' learning about Judaism. Such activities develop pupils' spiritual, social and moral understanding well. However, leaders are aware that the curriculum is not as effective in developing pupils' awareness of cultural differences.
- A wide variety of after-school clubs and enrichment opportunities allow pupils to play sport, including basketball, and to develop their creative skills. The sport premium is used effectively, for example to employ specialists to lead activity clubs at lunchtimes.

- Leaders' checks on writing are not precise enough to ensure that pupils with SEND make good progress. Monitoring of pupils' writing does not check that activities are matched to the individual starting points of pupils with SEND. Consequently, work is often too challenging, which slows pupils' progress.

Governance of the school

- The governing body is experienced and has a good strategic understanding of the school's strengths and areas that need further development. This is because governors visit the school regularly and check on the work of leaders in relation to the impact on the quality of education provided. Their persistence and attention to detail have proved key factors in the school's improvement journey. Through regular checks on leaders' actions, governors accurately evaluate where aspects are not as strong as they should be. Consequently, they are supporting the school's ongoing improvement.
- Governors have high expectations of pupils and teachers. They are very clear in their expectations that additional funding, including for disadvantaged pupils, should be well targeted and used appropriately so that it makes a difference to pupils' outcomes.
- Governors fulfil their statutory duties well. Effective training for governors helps them to fulfil these duties consistently. Governors are diligent in checking the safeguarding policy and procedures, the single central record and the safe recruitment of staff.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Staff work well as a team and share a strong commitment to keeping pupils safe.
- Leaders have developed a strong culture of safeguarding. Staff receive high-quality training in safeguarding and are clear about the actions they must take if they have concerns about a pupil or a member of staff. They have a secure understanding of the signs of abuse and are clear about the school's procedures for reporting any concerns. Close liaison with outside agencies, including social care, result in timely responses to pupils' needs.
- Staff work effectively with pupils who have a range of complex social, emotional and health needs. For example, the leader for special educational needs is well trained to support pupils who have specific emotional conditions affecting learning and behaviour. On those few occasions when a pupil's behaviour escalates, school leaders have effective systems to share information with those who need it. This is helping to improve the behaviour of pupils, especially those who have particularly complex or additional needs.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of assessment is good. Consequently, teachers are clear when pupils do not understand something that they have been taught. Disadvantaged pupils are monitored particularly closely. When teachers become aware that a pupil is falling behind, they make sure that they are given extra support. However, assessment is not as accurate for pupils with SEND.

- Mathematics teaching is successful in developing arithmetic skills across the school. Pupils develop their skills at an age-appropriate level. The school's new approach to mathematics 'challenges' using information technology programs to support pupils' learning is fully embedded. As a result, teachers set exciting work that meets the needs of all pupils. Work in pupils' mathematics books shows there is a strong focus on developing pupils' reasoning and problem-solving skills, in addition to revisiting gaps in basic skills.
- Teaching across the school inspires a love of reading. Once pupils have mastered basic reading skills, they are encouraged to read widely and tackle challenging books. Children share their books with adults in school. This, together with the effective teaching in phonics, is helping children in Reception to get off to a good start in reading.
- Teachers capture pupils' enthusiasm by using interesting topics in history and geography. Teaching in science is particularly effective. Pupils are given the opportunity to explore scientific concepts through experiments and investigations and through engaging in environmental debates, such as about plastic pollution.
- Teaching assistants in key stages 1 and 2 provide effective support to pupils with whom they work, especially in reading and phonics. They accurately identify pupils' barriers to learning and work diligently to help pupils overcome them.
- Teachers have developed a set of 'non-negotiables' to be used by pupils in the presentation of their work. Leaders acknowledge that this is not proving successful, because improvements are not evident in pupils' work. For example, while teachers' expectations for presentation of work have raised the quality of punctuation and vocabulary, handwriting across the school is not of a high enough standard.
- Recently, teachers changed their approach to the teaching of writing by introducing 'writing tool-kits'. In key stage 2, pupils focus on developing their knowledge of vocabulary and punctuation. Pupils have wide-ranging opportunities to write at length across a range of genres, including fiction and non-fiction. Pupils' books indicate that this is beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' progress.
- Assessment for pupils with SEND is not as accurate or strong as for other pupils in writing. As a result, pupils do not benefit from teaching that is precise enough to meet their individual needs. Writing activities planned for pupils with SEND are not broken down into the small steps required.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils have a strong understanding of e-safety. They learn how to stay safe online through activities in class and special assemblies. Pupils are able to provide good examples of inappropriate internet requests and how they would react. For example, they know not to provide personal details online.
- Staff and all parents and carers feel that the pupils are safe and well cared for at the school. One parent summarised the views of many with the comment: 'You only have

to be within the school for a few minutes to feel that it is welcoming and a safe, lovely environment for our children to thrive and grow in.'

- Pupils appreciate the leadership responsibilities they are given, for example as school councillors and house captains. They take these roles seriously and talk proudly about their roles. This contributes to the strong sense of belonging that embodies the school.
- Despite leaders' 'non-negotiables', pupils do not take enough pride in their work. Where teachers' expectations are not consistently high, pupils do not take sufficient pride in their handwriting and presentation of their work.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- There are good systems to support pupils who find managing their own behaviour difficult. Consequently, there are no recorded exclusions for very poor behaviour. There are very few incidents of poor behaviour because of the successful action taken by the school to encourage pupils to be responsible for their conduct.
- Where attendance overall, and for certain groups of pupils, has been lower than average, leaders have been successful in their efforts to improve this by working more closely with parents and the education welfare officer. Consequently, attendance is improving and is broadly in line with the national average.
- All parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, are confident that their children are safe in school.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Some caution needs to be taken when interpreting achievement information due to the small numbers of pupils in each year group, including Year 6. Additionally, many children join the school with skills and abilities that are below those typical for their age. Nonetheless, the work in pupils' books, supported by the school's own information, shows that all pupils currently are making strong progress from their starting points, in reading and mathematics.
- Over the past two years, pupils' progress has improved due to better teaching, with teachers focusing more precisely on meeting the needs of the pupils in Year 2 and Year 6. However, too few pupils reach the higher standard in Year 6 due to significant gaps in prior learning.
- The rigorous implementation of a daily phonics programme is rapidly improving pupils' phonics knowledge and reading.
- Work in pupils' English books shows that they are improving their ability to write for longer periods of time across a wide range of genres, including fiction and non-fiction. However, pupils' handwriting and presentation often lapse when writing at length. Occasionally, in some books, the standard drops to well below the school's expectations.
- Many of the current pupils with SEND are making strong progress in reading and mathematics. However, some are not making the progress of which they are capable in writing. The main barriers to learning for these pupils are gaps in their prior learning of

spelling, grammar and punctuation skills, accompanied by poor letter formation. Leaders know that they need to take effective action to improve the pupils' progress, including ensuring that pupils' work is at the right level of challenge for their starting points.

Early years provision

Good

- Children join the Reception class with abilities that are often below those expected of children of their age. Strong teaching in the early years is helping children to catch up. However, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development by the end of Reception was below the national average in 2018. Some caution needs to be taken when interpreting achievement information due to the very small number of children in the Reception class.
- Leaders make good use of additional funding to support disadvantaged children in the early years. Teachers make regular and accurate assessments to ensure that pupils with SEND have the right learning experiences to support their development. In particular, speech and language support has been effective in improving children's communication and language skills.
- Teachers use assessment and planning to focus learning on children's next steps in learning. They know the children well and use this knowledge to plan activities that target what children need to learn next.
- Adult intervention is well planned to enhance learning when children play independently or to direct them to a purposeful activity. However, leaders are aware that, occasionally, teaching assistants lack sufficient knowledge, understanding and experience in the early years curriculum to support children effectively.
- The effective teaching of phonics means that children make good progress with their reading and learn to decode words when reading simple texts. Teachers work with the leader to ensure that improving the quality of children's spoken language is a priority because some children enter the Reception Year with specific communication difficulties.
- Leaders have ensured that the quality of the continuous provision is effective in providing high-quality opportunities for children to independently develop their knowledge and understanding across the full range of areas included in the early years curriculum.
- Safeguarding practices in the early years are effective. There are no breaches of statutory welfare requirements.

School details

Unique reference number	113261
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10088294

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 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	37
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Sheila Manning
Head of School	Mrs Abby Bassett
Telephone number	01822 890245
Website	www.princetown-primary.devon.sch.uk/
Email address	admin@princetown-primary.devon.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	31 January–1 February 2017

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils are of White British background.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above the national average. The proportion of pupils with education, health and care plans is below the national average.
- The school is in a management partnership with An Daras Multi-Academy Trust.

Information about this inspection

- The lead inspector visited lessons jointly with the executive headteacher and the head of school.
- Pupils' work was scrutinised.
- The lead inspector listened to pupils reading their books.
- Meetings were held with the executive headteacher, head of school, senior and middle leaders, the chief executive officer of An Daras Multi-Academy Trust and members of the governing body.
- The lead inspector talked with groups of pupils from key stages 1 and 2, as well as pupils informally across the school.
- The lead inspector had a phone conversation with the local authority school improvement officer.
- Information and other documentary evidence were evaluated, including that related to safeguarding, assessment, school evaluation and external reviews.
- Pupils' behaviour was observed in lessons, around the school and during playtimes and lunchtimes.
- The lead inspector took account of parents' texts, pupils' surveys and the four responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View.

Inspection team

Susan Costello, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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