

Princetown Community Primary School

Princetown, Tavistock Road, Yelverton, Devon PL20 6QE

Inspection dates

31 January – 1 February 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The school's overall effectiveness has declined since the previous inspection. Recent decisive actions to remedy past weaknesses have not yet fully improved outcomes for pupils.
- Pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics has not been good enough over time. Strengthened leadership and teaching have accelerated current pupils' progress, but have not raised their attainment sufficiently.
- Middle leaders are developing their leadership skills, but are not yet contributing fully to school improvement.
- The behaviour of pupils is not consistently good. Some pupils lack the resilience to concentrate fully on their learning. Persistent absence by a very small number of pupils is too high.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is variable. At times, pupils, including the most able, are not fully stretched in their learning.
- Some pupils are not attaining the writing skills expected for their age.
- Pupils' ability to reason and solve increasingly complex mathematical problems is not developed with consistent effectiveness across the school.
- Over time, children in the early years have not been provided with the breadth and quality of experiences needed to fully secure their readiness to learn in Year 1.
- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information on its website.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders share a determined vision and drive for the continued improvement of the school. They are tackling the right areas for development and demonstrate the capacity to further raise pupils' achievements.
- The interim executive board is having a positive impact on school improvement. Its members understand the school's strengths and weaknesses very well.
- Pupils are kept safe at school. They enjoy school and have very supportive relationships with adults and with each other. Pupils cooperate well in their learning.
- The school's much-improved sports and community activities enrich pupils' learning and contribute well to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen teaching, learning and assessment to secure pupils' good and better progress across the school by:
 - ensuring that teachers frequently check how well pupils are learning and swiftly adapt activities so that all pupils are sufficiently challenged, including the most able
 - deepening pupils' mathematical reasoning and problem-solving skills systematically through the curriculum
 - supporting those pupils who still need to improve their writing skills so they catch up quickly
 - providing a wider variety of stimulating opportunities for children in the early years to explore and develop their ideas and skills.
- Further improve pupils' behaviour and attendance by:
 - stimulating pupils' interest in learning, developing their resilience and commitment to their work
 - working closely with parents and outside agencies to reduce the persistent absence of a small number of pupils.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - newly established middle leaders improve their analysis of performance information to contribute fully to raising standards
 - the school meets requirements on the publication of specified information, including the impact of pupil premium funding and sports funding, on its website.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Over time, leaders have been unable to maintain the good quality of provision and outcomes for pupils identified at the last inspection.
- Some of the changes made by current leaders have not been in place long enough to impact fully. For example, steps taken to improve attendance are having a positive effect, but persistent absence remains too high. Similarly, improvements in teaching and pupils' attitudes to learning have not been sustained at a consistently good level over time to fully raise standards.
- Changes in leadership, including oversight by an interim executive board early in 2016, have strengthened the focus on school improvement. The pace of improvement has been quickened this academic year as a result of the board's work and by the determined leadership of the acting headteacher.
- Some middle leaders are new to their roles and are still developing their skills. They are engaging well in training and, by working closely with other colleagues, are beginning to improve the quality of teaching.
- The acting headteacher has continued work to refresh the school's community atmosphere. Indoor facilities for the early years are now much improved. However, outdoor learning facilities remain underdeveloped.
- With effective support from the interim executive board and the local authority, the acting headteacher has ensured that all safeguarding and welfare requirements are in place and are up to date. He is also ensuring that the pupil premium is used well to support disadvantaged pupils and that additional funds for those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are used effectively.
- The acting headteacher has strengthened arrangements for teachers' performance management. A new system for recording pupils' progress is helping staff to identify and rectify underachievement more effectively and at an earlier stage.
- Pupils' enjoyment of school is increasing. One pupil said, typically reflecting the views of others, 'The school is better and I am learning better now.' Pupils have supportive relationships with staff and with one another, and show increasingly positive responses in class and improved work in their books. Improving pupil outcomes, strengthened safeguarding arrangements and widened curricular and sporting provision show the school's restored capacity to improve.
- Leaders provide pupils with a broad and balanced curriculum that includes an appropriate emphasis on literacy and numeracy. It has been enhanced this academic year by an increased number of clubs and workshops presented by the Devon Wildlife Trust and visits by local artists and authors.
- The school makes effective provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It has established close links with the local community and church. The pupils are able to reflect on different cultures and beliefs when studying different celebrations such as Chinese New Year and Diwali during assemblies. The school widens pupils' understanding of multicultural Britain through the use of the internet to

link with other communities. Pupils also learn well about British values, such as democracy and respect, by participating in class debates and elections to the school council.

- Over time, the school has not made best use of the sports premium. However, this academic year the acting headteacher has introduced six new clubs, including cross-country and multi-sports. Pupils are supporting these wholeheartedly, with, for example, over half the school participating in cross-country running. The school is also using funds to provide specialist training for staff and for pupils so that they can act as sports leaders at breaktimes.
- The local authority has taken decisive action to secure a better future for the school. Local authority staff made careful appointments to the interim executive board and have helped the school to secure leadership capacity through acting headteachers. The local authority is now supporting the move into a management partnership with other schools to drive further improvement.

Governance of the school

- Since their appointment, members of the interim executive board have provided effective governance, playing a key role in improving the school over the past year. Their agreement to provide governance for an extended period of time affirms their commitment to school improvement. At the time of the inspection, the board was negotiating a management partnership with other schools. This decision and the retention of the acting headteacher show carefully considered strategic action to secure stability and future development for the school.
- Members of the interim executive board receive detailed reports from the headteacher and local authority advisers. They hold leaders to account for the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. Members of the interim executive board know that standards are still not good enough and fully support staff in bringing improvement as swiftly as possible. By so doing, for example, they now ensure that additional funding is used effectively to accelerate pupils' progress. Members of the interim executive board are supporting the headteacher in updating the website, so that all necessary information is published.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Safeguarding policies and procedures, including checks of the suitability of staff, are up to date and meet the requirements of the most recent guidance. Staff demonstrate very clearly that it is everyone's responsibility to keep pupils safe and know those pupils who may need additional support.
- The headteacher has acted assertively this academic year to update staff training and to establish a culture that protects pupils from risk of harm. Leaders sustain strong and effective links with outside agencies and family support workers which are reducing persistent absence. The headteacher follows statutory procedures very carefully and works supportively with some very vulnerable families to help keep pupils safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, although improving, varies at times across the classes and is not consistently good. This happens when teaching is not matched closely enough to pupils' starting points. On these occasions, gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills are not overcome quickly enough.
- Some initiatives are improving pupils' learning, but these have not been in place long enough to raise pupils' achievement. These include, for example, efforts to teach pupils how to become more resilient and contribute more to their own learning.
- At times, teachers do not increase the challenge of the work they give to the pupils quickly enough. This was evident in Years 3 and 4, for example, when the most able, although challenged to complete their work in a given period of time, were capable of attempting harder tasks.
- Even so, new staff and strengthened leadership, monitoring, and development of teaching this academic year have injected a fast pace of improvement. This was seen during the inspection in the pupils' increasingly thoughtful and accurate responses to teachers' questions. It is also evident in the teachers' accurate assessments of pupils' progress and in the positive development of pupils' skills in their books.
- This academic year, leaders and teachers have raised their expectations of what pupils should achieve. Teachers are particularly focused on those pupils who, because of past underachievement, are not working at the level expected for their age. They are having some success, for example, in correcting pupils' misconceptions about how to use grammar and punctuation to improve their writing.
- Teachers are encouraging pupils to think more about their mathematics. However, pupils are not routinely challenged strongly enough to deepen their reasoning and problem-solving skills. As a result, too few pupils, including the most able, have reached or exceeded age-related expectations.
- The teaching of phonics and reading are more consistently effective. This is because teachers question and challenge pupils at a suitable level to widen their vocabulary and enrich their learning. For example, pupils in Reception and Year 1 were observed listening intently and offering ideas about favourite stories such as 'Chocolate Mousse for Greedy Goose'.
- Teachers and teaching assistants promote very supportive relationships with pupils and value their efforts. This has a positive influence by lifting pupils' confidence. Teachers are increasingly providing work that interests pupils, who are consequently enjoying school more and trying harder to improve their work. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 said that they like the regular 'start the day work' and explained that they spell words more accurately and can show how they write complex sentences as a result.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work well together in their support of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. They are using assessments more precisely than in the past to identify pupils' starting points and target support to meet their needs at an earlier stage. At the time of the inspection, more progress had been made in raising pupils' confidence and reading skills than in their basic written and numeracy skills.

- Teachers give good guidance about how pupils should edit and correct their work. This is improving their confidence, understanding and ability to produce longer pieces of writing.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement. This is because some pupils, more often boys than girls, lack the resilience needed to sustain full engagement in learning, which impedes their progress.
- All staff diligently implement updated procedures to secure pupils' welfare and to keep them safe. As a result, pupils enjoy school and share supportive relationships with adults and each other.
- Adults who visit the school describe a much-improved, welcoming community atmosphere in all classes. During the inspection, pupils showed consideration to each other, to staff and to visitors and clearly enjoyed trusting friendships.
- An increasing number of pupils are demonstrating and expressing pride in their work and in the school. Without prompting, some pupils eagerly showed their improved writing to the inspector, with one boy exclaiming, 'Look how much more work I'm doing now compared to last September!'
- Pupils are also enjoying increased opportunities to undertake responsibility. For example, members of the school council and prefects proudly described how they are working to improve the school and help younger pupils at lunchtimes.
- When questioned, parents confirmed their view that teachers are managing behaviour better and pupils are enjoying school more now than in the past.
- Pupils know the different forms that bullying might take, for example they talk about cyber bullying and show that they know how to stay safe when using computers. Pupils say that there is no bullying in the school now.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. This is because over time behaviour has not been good enough and has adversely affected pupils' progress.
- Pupils' behaviour has improved this academic year, but pupils say that a very small number of pupils still need adult guidance to stop 'thoughtless, silly behaviour'.
- Records show that pupils' attendance over time has remained below the national average. Historically, leaders have not acted rigorously enough to end persistent absence. New leaders have worked much more rigorously with parents and outside agencies to tackle persistent absence this academic year. Although attendance has improved, with a large number of pupils now sustaining full attendance, a small number of pupils are still persistently absent. This is hindering their progress.
- School records show that the acting headteacher took decisive action early this

academic year to end poor behaviour. Records show that the very small number of pupils who have acted inappropriately in the past have radically improved their behaviour. As a result, there have been no serious incidents recently.

- The vast majority of pupils now behave well. When questioned, pupils said that they feel safe and added that 'teachers make us feel safe, we can go to them and they help people to calm down'. Other pupils also commented that 'behaviour is managed better now and has improved'.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Given the very small number of pupils in each year group, care must be taken in evaluating pupils' performance in national tests compared with that of pupils nationally. Even so, in recent years the low standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 and 6 raised questions about underachievement and their readiness for future education.
- Standards vary across the year groups, especially in writing and mathematics. An increasing number of pupils are working at levels expected for their age but, with the exception of reading, not enough are demonstrating skills that are better than this. For example, pupils' skills in writing meaningful sentences and in reasoning to solve problems in mathematics remain underdeveloped.
- Leaders' and teachers' strengthened assessments of pupils' skills at the beginning of this academic year highlighted the legacy of previous underperformance. The school's raised expectations of pupils' achievement and rigorous actions to improve teaching are rapidly overcoming this legacy. Pupils' work in books clearly shows the faster progress they have maintained this academic year.
- As with other pupils, the most able are now making faster progress than previously. This is because teachers are more frequently setting higher expectations and providing suitably challenging work. Even so, some pupils have not yet made the good progress needed over time to reach the standards of which they are capable.
- Pupils' performance in phonics screening checks during Year 1 and Year 2 have broadly matched expected standards. This reflects improvements in the teaching of phonics and reading, which have continued this academic year. Pupils confidently read books and texts with fluency and are able to describe their favourite characters and explain story plots. They use computers to aid their learning in class.
- The school's assessments show that too many disadvantaged pupils began this academic year with levels of skill lower than expected for their age. However, more recent assessments show that most pupils are currently making more rapid progress. This is because teachers are using additional funding more effectively to support the pupils' personal needs as well as academic skills. For example, teachers use funds to boost pupils' confidence by including them in trips and clubs and to provide extra adult support for their learning in class. Pupils' work in books clearly shows that past differences in the skills of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils are diminishing and are increasingly matching those expected for their age.
- School and inspection checks of the progress made by pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities show a similar pattern to that of other pupils in the school. They are making faster progress now because staff get to know them well,

promote encouraging relationships, and are identifying and supporting their particular needs at an early stage.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- The quality of provision in the early years requires improvement. In previous years, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development was below average and reflected weaknesses in provision. Inconsistencies continue in the range and quality of learning experiences provided for the children.
- Children, especially boys, do not have sufficient opportunities to develop their physical and creative skills. Leaders are aware of this and have plans to further enrich children's learning outdoors but, at the time of the inspection, the outdoor facilities had not been fully developed.
- Overall, children's skills on entry are typically low for their age. As a result of the work of staff, an increasing proportion of children are on course to achieve a good level of development and so are well prepared to start Year 1.
- The Reception children are taught as an integral part of the key stage 1 class. They settle well into daily routines and mix, play and learn happily with the older pupils. The teacher and teaching assistants work well as a team to keep children safe. They engage fully in training and show good care for the children. Consequently, the children share friendly relationships, behave well and feel safe.
- The teacher works closely with parents and has improved the systems used to assess and record children's progress. These are being shared more fully with staff and parents than in the past. As a result, staff know the children well. They are increasingly effective, for example, in supporting children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and including them in the day-to-day life of the school. The teacher is also making good use of additional funding to identify and support the needs of disadvantaged children at an early stage.
- The new leader, appointed this academic year, has improved the focus placed on developing children's skills across the required areas of learning. The school has reorganised and refurnished indoor resources and facilities. As a result, more children than in the past are making good progress, especially in their personal, social and emotional development and readiness to learn.
- The teacher and teaching assistants teach phonic skills and develop the children's interest in books and early reading skills effectively. Children also enrich their own and each other's learning. For example, they extend their speaking and numeracy skills by working together in the 'Healthy Eating Café' role-play area.

School details

Unique reference number	113261
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10000495

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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	48
Appropriate authority	Interim executive board
Chair	Ingrid Fisher
Acting headteacher	Phil Whittle
Telephone number	01822 890245
Website	www.princetown-primary.devon.sch.uk
Email address	admin@princetown-primary.devon.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	19–20 October 2011

Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about the impact of pupil premium funding and sports premium funding on its website.
- Princetown Primary is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds and a well below average proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above average and is very high in some year groups.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above average.
- Children experience early years provision in a combined Reception, Years 1 and 2 class. The other pupils across the school are also taught in two mixed year group classes across Years 3 to 6.

- Princetown Primary School works closely with other local schools as a member of the Tavistock Cooperative Learning Trust.
- There has been a significant turnover of staff in recent years.
- The governance of the school is undertaken by an interim executive board.
- The school has been led in recent years by temporary acting headteachers. The current acting headteacher commenced his duties at the school at the beginning of this academic year.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning across all classes, accompanied by the acting headteacher.
- A wide range of documents was scrutinised, including records relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance, safeguarding procedures and the school's self-evaluation.
- The inspector examined the school's systems for monitoring progress and records of checks on the quality of teaching.
- The inspector talked to individual pupils and a representative group of pupils about the school and their work. He listened to individual pupils reading and also examined an extensive sample of pupils' work across a range of subjects and classes.
- The inspector met with members of the interim executive board and the local authority and held a further telephone conversation with a representative of the interim executive board. Meetings were held with all other teaching staff, mainly about their middle leadership roles. The inspector also spoke informally with several teaching assistants and support staff.
- There were insufficient responses to Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire. The inspector considered the written comments of two parents and also gathered the views of parents during informal meetings at the school.
- The inspector evaluated the school's use of the sport premium and the pupil premium.

Inspection team

Alexander Baxter, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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