

Princes Plain Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101600
Local Authority	Bromley
Inspection number	323485
Inspection date	15 May 2009
Reporting inspector	Raminder Arora

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	388
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev Roger Bristow
Headteacher	Mrs Pam King
Date of previous school inspection	4 July 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Church Lane Bromley BR2 8LD
Telephone number	020 8462 2443
Fax number	020 8462 2830

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors. The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- the support for pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and those who are vulnerable
- the quality of teaching and the resultant progress that pupils make, particularly in writing
- pupils' personal development, their behaviour, attitudes and attendance
- the pastoral care the school provides, and how well it supports and keeps track of pupils' progress.

The inspectors met with staff, governors and pupils. Parts of lessons were observed, 91 parents' questionnaires were analysed, samples of pupils' work were examined and information provided by the school, including records of pupils' progress and the school's self-evaluation, was scrutinised. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Princes Plain is similar in size to most primary schools and hosts one Nursery and two Reception classes as part of its Early Years Foundation Stage provision. The school serves a diverse community with a broad range of social backgrounds. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is high. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is higher than average, with about average numbers at the early stages of learning English as a new language. A higher than average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with statements of special educational need. The difficulties relate mainly to specific learning, behaviour, and speech and language. Additionally, the school has two resourced classes for 17 pupils with severe and complex learning needs. Five pupils are in local authority care. A high number of pupils enter the school after the normal entry point in the Nursery or Reception classes. The school has achieved the Sportsmark and Healthy School awards. It provides a breakfast club and more recently an after school club.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

At the heart of this outstanding school is a real commitment to ensure that every individual really matters. As one parent wrote, 'Princes Plain is not just a great school, it is a place where a caring staff team works excellently well together to achieve the best from every child'. The overwhelming majority of parents and pupils agree. In the Early Years Foundation Stage there is an impressive drive to ensure that children get off to a flying start, even though most join the Nursery with very low skills. This drive focuses on rapidly developing their personal, social and emotional development alongside boosting their language skills. Consequently, children move to Year 1 with excellent attitudes and an infectious enthusiasm for learning.

High-quality teaching across the school ensures that pupils, including those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make excellent progress from their starting points. At the end of Year 2 and Year 6 the standards are below average. The school's national test results are, however, adversely affected by the inclusion of pupils who attend the additionally resourced classes and have severe and very complex learning difficulties. The high mobility of pupils has a major effect on standards. In all classes many pupils join the school from other schools or from abroad. Most of these new pupils have low starting points. Nevertheless, standards for Year 6 pupils were close to average in the 2007 and 2008 national assessments. The keen support of teaching assistants, which boosts the impact of the teaching, plays a key role in ensuring that pupils who have speech, language and communication difficulties, those who have moderate learning difficulties, and children learning English as a new language, make outstanding progress alongside their peers. Improving standards in reading and writing have been particular areas for development. An increased focus on guided reading, the purchase of appealing and culturally relevant books and the systematic teaching of letters and their sounds (phonics) have begun to impact positively on standards in both reading and writing. The school is aware of the need for increased opportunities for all pupils to develop and apply their writing skills in other subjects.

The school is very effective in overcoming potential barriers to learning, such as those presented by many pupils who enter unable to speak English or join school outside the normal times. It has established excellent procedures to help pupils settle in quickly, including rigorous initial assessments. The low-achieving pupils receive intensive support in small groups to develop their basic skills and are quickly integrated into classes. One of the school's strengths is the way policies and procedures are applied consistently by all staff to ensure that pupils receive the best quality of education. The school's motto, 'Only the best will do', is extremely well translated into practice. Currently, pupils' progress, as determined by the school's very rigorous tracking and validated by inspection findings, is outstanding. Achievement is enhanced also by an exemplary curriculum that adds immensely to pupils' enjoyment of school. The stimulating curriculum is finely tuned to provide challenge and motivation. Almost all lessons challenge the more able pupils to make the progress they should. Pupils enjoy school and achieve extremely well; their behaviour is outstanding. Pupils have a clear understanding of how to stay safe and lead healthy lifestyles. For example, some pupils successfully led the healthy school project. Attendance is good. The school has very effective procedures in place and works closely with the parents to ensure that pupils do not miss school. Pupils in all classes work eagerly towards 100% attendance to obtain the attendance trophy for their class. The well-organised and very popular breakfast club and the good provision of the after school club are thoroughly enjoyed by pupils who regularly attend these.

The driving force behind the pupils' success is the outstanding leadership at all levels, underpinned by the school's very supportive ethos and values. Underachievement is challenged regularly. For example, the school's meticulous system for tracking progress identified some underperformance in pupils' writing and very effective intervention activities were swiftly introduced to bring about marked improvements. Inspectors were impressed with the moving and inspiring work linked to the 'Wonderful Highway Man' in Year 6 and the Tongue Twisters in Year 2.

The pupils take on the wide range of responsibilities open to them, including acting as members of the school council and as prefects, with great enthusiasm. From entertaining the local community with wonderful performances of steel drums to supporting children in Africa, pupils are developing a good understanding of their place in the global community. The diversity of cultures and faiths represented across the school is warmly celebrated and promoted. Consequently, the spiritual, moral, social and emotional aspects of pupils' development are outstanding. Although pupils' basic skills in literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology are satisfactory, they learn to work together and acquire very good team skills to prepare them well for the next stages in their education and futures.

School self-evaluation is robust and carefully assesses the impact of interventions and developments. Checks on each individual's progress ensure that pupils of all abilities and backgrounds achieve as well as they can. Alongside the excellent senior leadership team, governors play a formative role in shaping the school's future and successfully monitor the work of the school with a balance of challenge and support. Leaders at all levels work very effectively as a unified team and have a very clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. For example, the school has begun to evaluate its work on community cohesion and recognised the need to fully establish this as part of its forward planning in order to strengthen its contribution to the cohesiveness of the local and wider community. The whole school has worked tirelessly to maintain and further build on the outcomes of the last inspection and has successfully taken the school forward. The school demonstrates an outstanding capacity for continuous improvement.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Most children join the Nursery with skills that are considerably lower than those expected for their age in all areas of learning. Outstanding care and regard for their welfare ensure that the children make rapid gains so that by the time they enter the Reception class, most show particularly good progress in their personal, social and emotional skills, and in their language and communication skills. Children continue to make excellent progress through the Reception classes. They become confident speakers and gain greatly in self-esteem. By the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, while the standards, particularly in children's language and communication skills, remain low, the majority have acquired a very good start to their education. Children's personal development improves greatly over time, which helps them learn increasingly well. Children make such good progress because the curriculum, teaching, support and consideration for their welfare are all of high quality. These aspects combine to make outstanding provision that meets the children's needs very effectively. Leadership and management are outstanding. The staff work collaboratively in a strong and reflective team that is committed to providing the best for the children. The children are happy and keen to take part in all that is offered. Staff keep a very careful track of children's progress. As a result, work and play activities are planned very well to meet the needs of the individual child as well as to support

the whole group. For example, assessment showed that problem-solving was a particular weakness for all children, so daily activities have been developed that set additional challenges for them. For instance, some children were seen conducting a survey of how children travel to school. Very good use is made of the outdoor areas to extend the children's play and learning, and exciting resources motivate them to use initiative and imagination in their play.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the levels of attainment across the school, particularly in writing.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	1

¹Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

28 May 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Princes Plain Primary School, Bromley, BR2 8LD

On behalf of the inspection team, I would like to thank you very much for your very friendly welcome and for helping us when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed our day very much and were really pleased to hear how excited and proud you are about your school. Princes Plain is an outstanding school. These are the best things about your school.

- You behave extremely well and we know you enjoy being at school very much because you and your parents told us this.
- You have an excellent understanding of how to keep yourselves fit and healthy.
- You are keen to learn and get on well with each other.
- Most of you have achieved exceptionally well by the time you leave the school.
- You support the school and local community extremely well.
- You are developing a very good understanding of those who live in communities that are different from your own.
- You enjoy immensely the exciting activities your teachers plan for you.
- All the staff and governors are working together with your headteacher to make the school as good as possible.

To become even better, we have asked the school to make sure that you do even better, particularly in writing.

You can help by continuing to work hard and by coming to school every day.

Finally, we would like to thank you once again for your help and wish you well for the future.

Yours faithfully

Raminder Arora

Lead Inspector