

Princefield First School

Saxon Road, Penkridge, Stafford, ST19 5EP

Inspection dates 12–13 September 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils get off to a good start in nursery and the Reception classes and become confident learners, particularly in speaking and listening, understanding instructions and using the language of mathematics.
- Pupils make good progress and reach above expected attainment levels in reading and mathematics by the end of Year 4.
- Standards in writing are improving quickly but are not quite as high as those in reading and mathematics.
- Teaching is good. Well-planned lessons and the recent emphasis on holding individual 'learning conversations' with pupils are having a marked impact on the progress of all groups.
- Disabled pupils and those with who have special educational needs make good progress as a result of carefully targeted support and challenge.
- The well thought out learning opportunities, based upon exciting introductions to topics, contribute to pupils' good attitudes and behaviour in and around school.
- Good leadership by the headteacher, senior staff and governors, underpinned by accurate self-evaluation, a clear plan for improvement and accountability at all levels, are the cornerstones of the schools success.
- The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and enables pupils to develop into successful learners who care about themselves, others and their environment.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Until very recently insufficient opportunities are given to pupils to develop their skills of independent learning which would help them to make even faster progress
- Not enough time is provided for pupils to mark one another's work and so understand how to improve their own work.
- Pupils do not write at length in many subjects so they do not make as much progress as they should.
- Some children in Reception and Year 1 do not form their letters correctly and this slows their progress in writing further up the school.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 20 lessons taught by seven teachers.
- Documentation was analysed including that related to teachers' planning, safeguarding, behaviour logs, attendance figures, the school's systems for improving teaching and learning and how the money allocated for pupil premium is spent.
- The inspectors took account of 30 responses to the online Parent View survey and three letters from parents. Responses to an inspection questionnaire from 14 members of staff were analysed.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, staff, a representative from the local authority, the Chair of the Governing Body, pupils and parents.

Inspection team

Bogusia Matusiak-Varley, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Keith Brown

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Princefield First School is an average sized first school.
- A below-average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for the pupil premium, (additional government funding for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and looked after children).
- Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The school has a very small proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and pupils who speak English as an additional language. None of these pupils are at the early stages of acquiring English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below the national average.
- The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below the national average.
- The school operates a daily breakfast club which is run by the governing body.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make more teaching outstanding by:
 - making sure that pupils are given more opportunities to develop their skills of active and independent learning
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to mark one another's work so they can get an even better idea of what they need to do to improve their own work.
- Raise standards in writing by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to write at length in subjects other than English
 - ensuring that children in the Reception and Year 1 have more focused teaching on forming their letters correctly in a range of play situations.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start the Early Years Foundation Stage with variable skills. Attainment on entry sometimes meets expected levels in listening, understanding and speaking and reading but below that expected in writing. At the end of Reception nearly half of the pupils exceed the early learning goals in all areas of learning other than writing where they meet the expectations for their age.
- Pupils in Key Stage 1 make good progress in all subjects, particularly in early reading, because of good teaching of letters and sounds and early listening skills especially in the woodland area where children delight in identifying the sounds of nature. This is reflected in the schools above average results in the national phonics screening test at the end of Year 1.
- By the end of Years 2 and 4, standards exceed the expected levels in reading and mathematics. In writing, progress is more variable but is improving rapidly due to concerted actions by the school. Scrutiny of pupils' work shows that they do not write extensively in subjects other than English. This is slowing their progress.
- Pupils in Years 2 and 4 have good comprehension skills and read fluently. They can read unfamiliar words and are able to talk about endings in a story and identify words that authors use to create mood.
- Through good teaching in mathematics, pupils are able to solve problems using well thought out strategies. The emphasis on daily mental arithmetic is enabling pupils to develop fast skills of number recall. Pupils of all abilities are able to tell one another what methods they used to solve number problems.
- The high emphasis placed on using information from assessments and developing individual learning conversations with pupils has paid dividends in the increased number of pupils who are getting higher levels in reading and mathematics.
- The early identification of pupils' needs and the good provision made for them, help disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve well.
- The small number of pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding receive well-targeted support in reading, writing and mathematics. As a result they are achieving standards similar to their class mates and higher attainers within this group make excellent progress, especially in reading and mathematics.
- Pupils' achievements in sports are good. They are working well in teams and this contributes well to their social development. The school has targeted the recent government money for developing sports to employ qualified coaches and increase the opportunities for pupils to have a wider access to different sports.

The quality of teaching is good

- The headteacher's accurate evaluation of teaching and learning and subsequent coaching of teachers, supported by robust performance management and professional development, has been instrumental in improving the quality of teaching in the school. This is most noticeable in

the increase in numbers of pupils getting higher levels in reading and mathematics.

- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Secure routines are established from the start so that children know what is expected of them. Nevertheless there are missed opportunities in the Reception class and for lower ability pupils in Year 1 to form their letters correctly in a range of play situations. This hinders writing development as children move up the school.
- There is consistent use of 'WOW' moments in lessons where teachers think of creative starting points to grab pupils' attention immediately. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, when the teacher read the story of the 'Owl Babies' the children were transfixed and listened attentively.
- Teachers' marking is good. Teachers give pupils detailed feedback and the recent introduction of 'learning conversations' is paying dividends as pupils know what they need to focus on in lessons. However, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to learn from each other by checking each other's work in lessons so that they can understand how to improve their own work.
- Teaching of reading is a strength due to the emphasis placed in teaching pupils the sounds that letters make and then finding the letters in text. Extra support given to the few pupils eligible for pupil premium funding who did not do well in the Year 1 phonics test has resulted in these pupils bridging the gap and now reading fluently.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and plan meticulously involving the teaching assistants who make a valid contribution to learning. They anticipate the pupils' needs and know what support to offer.
- Teachers often deepen their pupils learning by pushing for extended answers to questions. When asking pupils about how they reached a particular answer in mathematics they then asked them to explain the processes of getting there. This enabled other pupils to broaden their range of thinking strategies. Occasionally, teachers do not include opportunities for pupils to learn actively and independently.
- Parents are delighted with the teaching at the school because they find the teachers accessible due to the open door policy. The good use of home school link books keeps parents informed of what they can do to help their children's learning at home.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils behave well in and around school. In lessons they are attentive and have good attitudes to learning. They are polite and courteous to teachers and visitors.
- Pupils say that they feel safe and are well looked after by all adults in the school. They note that staff always listen to their views and that if anything should happen to threaten their safety they know that staff will always help them to sort things out quickly. This is borne out by the very positive parent and carer questionnaire responses and the interviews held with pupils.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the different forms of bullying, including cyber bullying, and the school has recently been awarded a quality mark for its E-safety provision. The school is a harmonious community with the older pupils helping the younger ones to settle in at the school.

- Attendance is above average. The well-attended breakfast club is well organised and provides stimulating activities. It helps working families and is having a positive effect on pupils' punctuality.
- Older pupils relish the opportunity to take on extra responsibilities such as being monitors. The school council is influential and enables pupils to become really involved in the life of the school.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, supported by her deputy and the governing body, provides strong leadership for the school.
- Secure and accurate systems are in place for self-evaluation. The monitoring of teaching and learning, together with well-focused training, is helping teachers to raise the bar in all aspects of their work. Decisions on pay rates are based on the whether or not teachers meet demanding targets and demonstrate measurable progress in their pupil's learning.
- Subject and pastoral leaders are making a positive contribution to pupils' learning. Assessments are agreed by whole staff and this is helping staff measure the quality of pupils' work accurately. The school actively promotes equality of opportunity and tracks the progress of different groups of pupils to ensure that the gap is closed between those who are vulnerable and those eligible for the government pupil premium funding.
- The good links with the Wolgarston Collaboration of Schools is pooling expertise among staff and improving transition arrangements to Middle School.
- The subjects and topics that children study engage them well and are well matched to their learning needs. The school offers a wide range of activities such as sports, arts and music as well as links with Pakistan and France, which contribute well to pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The local authority has provided good support for the school, especially in helping improve the quality of teaching and learning and in working with staff in the Early Years Foundation Stage to improve children's outdoor learning.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is good. Governors are actively involved in all aspects of school life and use information from the data dashboard, local authority data, headteacher reports, parent questionnaires and observations made from visiting the school to challenge the head teacher and senior staff about their decisions. They ensure that the salary progression of staff is justified. School finances are managed well and the school has good quality data to demonstrate spending on pupils' outcomes such as the allocation of pupil premium funding. The governors make sure that safeguarding policies and procedures meet current national requirements.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	124173
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	427094

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

Type of school	First
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	237
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sharon Mason
Headteacher	Mrs Paula Gallant
Date of previous school inspection	9 December 2008
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