

Princecroft Primary School

Princecroft Lane, Warminster, Wiltshire BA12 8NT

Inspection dates

28 February–1 March 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher provides determined and purposeful leadership. He is very well supported by his committed team, the members of which feel valued. They work seamlessly together to ensure that every child achieves their best.
- Investment in professional development has resulted in a more consistent approach to teaching and higher expectations of what pupils can achieve. Consequently, teaching is consistently good.
- Pupils make good progress. New approaches to the teaching of phonics, reading and mathematics have accelerated the progress that they make in these key skills.
- The pastoral support that the pupils receive contributes to their excellent personal development and well-being. They feel safe and extremely well cared for.
- Pupils' behaviour is impeccable. They are polite, work and play happily together and are very proud of their school. They have exceptionally positive attitudes to their learning, work hard and engage fully in all aspects of school life.
- Governors provide senior leaders with effective challenge and strong support.
- As a result of good leadership, children in the early years have a strong start to their education. They are prepared well for Year 1.
- Leadership of reading, writing and mathematics is good. Leaders monitor and evaluate progress effectively, using their specific expertise.
- Pupils learn the importance of British values and are respectful of the beliefs and views of others.
- Parents and carers are overwhelming in their praise of all aspects of the school's work.
- Leaders provide a broad and balanced curriculum which promotes effective learning. However, there are insufficient opportunities for the pupils to use their writing skills across the wider curriculum.
- The headteacher and governors face the challenge of maintaining high-quality subject leadership during a temporary period while a significant proportion of senior teachers take maternity leave.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality of teaching and pupils' progress in writing by ensuring that:
 - pupils have sufficient opportunities to use the grammar, punctuation and spelling skills they have learned, to write at length and in a wide range of subjects, such as history, geography and science.
- Maintain the strong subject leadership during the forthcoming transition period by ensuring that:
 - new approaches to teaching phonics, reading, writing and mathematics are fully embedded
 - pupils' progress continues to be monitored regularly
 - the quality of teaching and learning continues to be checked systematically to ensure that high expectations are maintained.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The improving outcomes of pupils are testament to the headteacher and his new team of teachers who share the same passion, drive and commitment to the school. They have a clear vision about what they need to do to continue to steer the school forward. Staff morale is very high.
- The leaders of English and mathematics have a firm grasp on their subjects. The changes that they have led have had a positive impact on the progress that pupils are making.
- The leader for reading has ensured that phonics is now taught consistently in all year groups. This is improving pupils' writing skills. There is now a higher profile given to reading around the school, with a substantial investment in new books, especially those which interest boys. The changes made to the way that reading is taught in key stage 2 are accelerating the progress that pupils make.
- The improvements led by the mathematics leader include the introduction of dedicated time at the start of each lesson to focus on basic arithmetic skills. There is also a greater focus on solving problems by pupils using and applying their knowledge of mathematical concepts.
- The school's self-evaluation is accurate and honest. Leaders are fully aware that many new approaches have been introduced during the past year and these need to be embedded fully.
- The headteacher is also aware of the challenges that the school faces during the forthcoming months when his strong team of senior leaders takes maternity leave. Nevertheless, he is confident that the structures that have been put in place, including the training of other teachers to take on temporary subject leadership roles, will ensure consistency and continued improvement.
- Teaching staff have undertaken a great deal of training, which has had a very positive impact on the quality of teaching and improving pupils' outcomes. They have also benefited from visits to a range of different schools in London, all of which serve challenging areas. This has raised their expectations of what their own pupils can achieve.
- The headteacher and his senior leadership team conduct regular checks on the quality of teaching. This is done through formal lesson observations, 'drop in sessions', and looking at pupils' work. The headteacher does not avoid any difficult messages and any actions required are followed up robustly. Teachers' targets for performance are set sharply against the progress of their pupils and they are held fully to account.
- Recent changes to the way in which the wider curriculum is taught are ensuring that the pupils receive a broad and balanced education. This includes all pupils learning a modern foreign language.
- Most subjects are taught through exciting and interesting topics, in ways which focus sharply on ensuring that pupils develop their knowledge. A wide range of visits and trips, which stimulate the pupils' interest, enrich the topics. Regular quizzes ensure that pupils not only gain the knowledge from these topics but also retain what they have

learned. Nevertheless, although the pupils undertake many different activities during topic sessions, not enough of these require them to extend their writing skills by using the knowledge they are gaining.

- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is embedded through all aspects of the school's work and is reflected in the school's stated values, to 'achieve respect, and believe'.
- The school is justifiably proud of its work to promote British values. Older pupils gain first-hand experience of democracy when they visit the Houses of Parliament and observe Members of Parliament debating various issues. They appreciate having their views heard when they discuss different topics during the daily 'family lunch' sessions. This helps them to learn how to contribute, share ideas, and reach overall agreements.
- The headteacher is overseeing provision for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities during the coordinator's maternity absence. Leaders spend the funding wisely to ensure that the needs of those pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are met. Their progress is carefully monitored.
- Leaders use pupil premium funding well to support children socially, academically and emotionally. Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils are much improved because the money is spent wisely and its impact is monitored carefully to ensure its effectiveness.
- Leaders make effective use of the primary physical education and sport premium funding to help pupils adopt an active and healthy lifestyle. Specialist training for teaching staff helps them to develop their confidence when teaching physical education. The wide range of sports activities at lunchtimes and after school promotes pupils' fitness. The funding also enables participation in local sporting competitions, such as swimming galas and dance festivals.
- Parents are enthusiastic in their praise for the leadership of the school. Their views can be summed up by one parent who texted to say that 'the school is incredibly well led by a fantastic head who will always go out of his way to help and support us in any way he can. He confidently leads a fantastic staff team who are all competent, professional, friendly and approachable.'

Governance of the school

- Governors share the passion and commitment of the headteacher and staff and have a good strategic overview.
- Recently, they have successfully managed temporary staffing changes, minimising disruption resulting from the high proportion of staff on maternity leave.
- Governors provide effective support and are not afraid to ask the headteacher and his senior leadership team challenging questions. They have a good understanding of the quality of teaching because they visit classes regularly to check for themselves.
- Governors, along with the headteacher, ensure that the school's priorities are embedded in the performance management of all staff.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

- There is a strong culture of safeguarding across the school. All staff and governors have received safeguarding training and are clear what they need to do if they are concerned about a child.
- There are clear processes in place for the recruitment and selection of staff. No one is allowed to start working at the school until all relevant checks have been completed. At the time of the inspection, the single central record reflected current guidance and legislation.
- The headteacher and his staff know their pupils and families very well and vigilantly check for any unusual circumstances or potential risks. Working very closely with the family support officer, the headteacher tenaciously follows up any concerns he may have with specialist external agencies.
- Parents agree that staff are vigilant in keeping children safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Actions taken to improve teaching are having a strong impact. This is reflected in the accelerated progress of all pupils in each year group, in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teachers have very high expectations of the quality and quantity of pupils' work. They demonstrate good subject knowledge and provide their pupils with effective challenge. Teachers monitor pupils' progress well during lessons and this allows them to move learning on or deal quickly with any misconceptions. This gives the most able pupils plenty of opportunities to extend their skills.
- Pupils are clear about what is expected of them because class routines are systematic and teachers consistently use the school's agreed format for teaching key skills. They respond to their teachers with real interest and enthusiasm in their learning. Pupils' behaviour in lessons is exceptional.
- The teaching of reading has improved significantly since the implementation of the new approach to teaching phonics and a change in the way that reading sessions are taught. As a consequence, pupils read fluently, developing a love of books as they move through the school. Teaching of specific reading skills during guided reading sessions is supporting pupils to gain more confidence in using non-fiction texts to reason, explain and work out the difference between facts and opinions.
- The teaching of writing is also developing well. It is closely interwoven with the teaching of phonics. An emphasis on creating sentences which are grammatically accurate, punctuated appropriately and neatly presented is a strong feature. Nevertheless, opportunities to write longer pieces of work across subjects including science, history and geography are limited.
- Mathematics is well taught and teachers consistently give pupils activities that challenge them to do their very best. Teaching builds on what pupils know and can do. Pupils have plenty of opportunities to test out their understanding in a range of mathematical problems. Pupils are challenged to calculate problems, use mathematical vocabulary accurately and evaluate their reasons for their answers. This develops their confidence as mathematicians.

- Teaching assistants work well as part of the teaching team and play an important role in the progress the pupils make. They are deployed well and skilfully provide timely help to individuals and groups.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Its success is typified during the daily 'family lunch' session. Sitting together with an adult in mixed-age group tables, pupils demonstrate immaculate table manners during the mealtime. They are very clear about what is expected of them and this is reflected in their high-quality self-discipline.
- Older pupils appreciate the responsibility they have for ensuring that their tables are prepared for their 'family group'. They sensibly collect the meals for their younger peers and make sure that any additional 'guests' on their table have been catered for. Adults also check to ensure that all pupils have chosen and eaten a healthy meal.
- The pupils' mature ability to discuss issues in a considered way is also highlighted during these lunchtime sessions. Daily topics and quotations from classic novels are used effectively to promote discussion around the tables. At the end of the lunchtime session, pupils confidently share their views and opinions with the rest of the school. The response from their audience demonstrates the respect and pride they have for their peers.
- Pupils report that they feel very safe in school and know that any worries or concerns can be shared with an adult. They demonstrate a strong understanding of the dangers of social media and talk confidently about e-safety.
- Pupils really enjoy coming to school and their eagerness to engage in their learning is reflected in their regular attendance and punctuality rates.
- Pupils are prepared extremely well to be active members of society through their role as school ambassadors and their involvement in community events and fund-raising activities.
- Parents report that their children feel safe in school and comment that they 'thrive in the supportive and friendly environment'.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. This was demonstrated very well during the inspection when, despite a heavy snowfall, the excitement of dressing up for World Book Day, and the announcement of an early school closure, their behaviour was impeccable.
- Pupils are eager and enthusiastic learners who concentrate extremely well in their lessons. Clear and consistent expectations from staff ensure that pupils know how to prepare for lessons. Agreed formats for setting out work help pupils to understand what is expected for them. Consequently, when completing their work they respond with care and accuracy.

- Pupils report that behaviour is consistently of a very high standard in school. They explain that adults deal appropriately with any rare incidents of anti-social behaviour.
- Pupils' behaviour in and around school is exemplary. They are polite and courteous to each other and to all adults. They play happily together on the playground, taking turns on equipment and participating in team games.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Caution needs to be exercised when interpreting published information for Princecroft, owing to the small numbers in some year groups and the significant proportion of pupils who join the school mid-way through their primary education.
- The strong impact of professional development and improved subject leadership is reflected in the accelerated progress of current pupils.
- Changing perceptions of what children with very low starting points can achieve have transformed the outcomes at the end of the Reception Year. In 2017, the proportion of children who reached a good level of development at the end of Reception, which includes their achievement in the key areas of reading, writing and mathematics, was above the national average. Observations of current Reception children's learning, together with scrutiny of their records of progress, shows that the majority of them are also on track to reach a good level of development.
- The introduction of the new consistent approach to teaching phonics has had a very significant impact on all pupils throughout the school. For example, in 2017, the proportion of pupils who met the expected level in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 was average. This was a good improvement from the previous year when it was well below average. Pupils in the current Year 1 are all on track to meet the expected level.
- In the 2017 national tests at the end of Year 6, the proportion of pupils who reached the expected standard for their age in reading and writing was below average. Progress in reading for the disadvantaged pupils was significantly below average. In the 2017 national tests at the end of Year 2, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard was also below average.
- These outcomes were not a surprise to leaders, because they recognised that there had been a legacy of poor teaching in the past and high mobility into these year groups. However, it was acknowledged that these outcomes were not good enough.
- Extending the way in which phonics is taught in Reception and Year 1 to the rest of the school has had a very positive impact on accelerating the progress that all pupils are making in both reading and writing. Scrutiny of current pupils' work, coupled with the school's rigorous assessment records, indicates that nearly all pupils in Years 2 and 6 who have been at the school for an extended period of time are on track to meet the expected standards for their age in reading and writing. This includes those pupils who are disadvantaged.
- Changes to the way that mathematics is taught are reflected in the improving trend of the Year 2 national test results. In 2016, they were below average, but they improved to average in 2017. Current Year 2 pupils are securely on track with some already exceeding expectations for their age.

- Improvements to the way in which current Year 6 pupils are taught how to use and apply their mathematical skills are also having a strong impact on accelerating their progress. Their work and the detailed records kept by the school indicate that most will reach the expected standard for their age. This represents an improvement on the previous year, when the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard was below average.
- Those pupils who are disadvantaged or have SEN and/or disabilities make good progress because teaching staff support them well in class.

Early years provision

Good

- Leadership and management of the early years is strong and secure. The early years leader has a good understanding of what is being done well and what needs to improve further. This has enabled the temporary Reception teacher to step seamlessly into post during her maternity leave.
- The learning environment indoors is vibrant and resourced well. Whatever the weather, the newly developed outdoor area provides a wealth of exciting activities. This rich provision enhances the experiences of the children and helps them to progress well in their learning.
- Relationships are warm and positive in Reception and this enables children to feel secure, calm and settled. Children's progress in their personal, social and emotional development is strong and results from the high expectations of all adults. Children behave well, are considerate towards each other and show good levels of independence.
- Reception children quickly develop confidence and engage well in their learning by listening carefully to adults, following instructions and engaging in activities. Adults ask questions to encourage them to think deeply.
- Developing children's skills in phonics, reading and writing is a priority in the early years. Staff training in phonics and in the teaching of writing and mathematics has had a positive impact on improving teaching and the children's learning.
- Most of the children understand that sentences begin with a capital letter and finish with a full stop. They make good use of their phonics knowledge to work out unknown words. Children work enthusiastically towards an award which recognises that they know all their number bonds up to 10.
- The leader monitors children's learning closely and provides extra support to those who need it. This ensures that children are well prepared for the transition to Year 1.
- The early years leader has worked hard to establish a positive partnership with parents. Home visits, prior to the children starting school, help to contribute to initial assessments. Workshops for parents help them to support their children's learning at home. These all contribute to the good progress that the children make.

School details

Unique reference number	126259
Local authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	10047863

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	127
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Molly Johnston
Headteacher	Michael Park
Telephone number	01985 212704
Website	www.princecroft.wilts.sch.uk
Email address	admin@princecroft.wilts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	February 2015

Information about this school

- This is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Nearly all pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for the pupil premium fund is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is average. The proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is well above the national average.
- In 2017, the school met the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school operates a breakfast club.
- The majority of teachers in the school were not in post at the time of the previous inspection.

- There is one Reception class for the early years children. They attend full time.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher and subject leaders. She also met with four members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. The inspector had a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector made visits to all classrooms with the headteacher.
- The inspector scrutinised a wide selection of pupils' books with school leaders.
- The inspector also heard a group of pupils from Years 2 and 6 read and spoke to pupils both formally and informally.
- The inspector observed behaviour in classrooms, during 'family lunch' and outside on the playground and field.
- Sixteen responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, were considered, as well as discussions with parents during the inspection.
- Various school documents were scrutinised, including the school's self-evaluation and action plans, monitoring records and information about managing teachers' performance. Minutes of governors' committee meetings were also considered.
- Documents relating to safeguarding were checked, as was published information on the school's website.

Inspection team

Lorna Brackstone, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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