

Primrose Hill Church of England Primary Academy

School Crescent, Lydney, Gloucestershire GL15 5TA

Inspection dates

28–29 September 2016

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	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The school has improved rapidly since becoming an academy. Pupils are now making good progress from previously low starting points.
- Leadership and management are highly effective. The new principal has the confidence of parents, governors and pupils. She is ambitious about what pupils can achieve. The principal has communicated this to her team and in most classes these higher expectations are resulting in pupils making rapid progress.
- Governors know the school well. They are supportive of the changes made, but will also ask questions and challenge school leaders to ensure that initiatives are effective.
- Teachers plan interesting lessons and activities and pupils speak enthusiastically about their learning. Teachers monitor progress carefully and give extra help to those who need to catch up.
- In a small minority of classes, teachers do not have sufficiently high expectations of what their pupils can achieve.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils is tracked carefully to ensure that they achieve as well as they can. In nearly all classes and subjects, disadvantaged pupils are making good progress similar to or faster than other pupils.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make better progress in mathematics than in reading and writing. Additional provision has been put in place to develop pupils' literacy skills more rapidly. However, this is recent and only just beginning to have an impact.
- Pupils are confident, happy learners. They pay attention in class and have good attitudes to learning.
- Arrangements for safeguarding are good. Pupils say that they are kept safe in school and they feel safe. This view is supported by parents, staff and governors.
- Children get off to a good start in Reception. Parents praised the arrangements to help children settle into school. They enjoy well-planned, purposeful activities that develop academic and social skills.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:
 - pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are prioritised so that they make faster progress in reading and writing by intervening quickly if progress slows
 - there is a consistently high standard of teaching in all year groups
 - teachers share and celebrate best practice throughout the school and across the wider academy trust
 - teachers have high expectations of what their pupils are capable of achieving.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The recently appointed school principal has the confidence of parents, governors, staff and pupils. Parents commented that 'she has turned the school around' and it has 'improved amazingly'. Governors commented that 'she has transformed the school'.
- Communication between the principal and governors is good and governors commented that the relationship is open and honest. Governors receive detailed information that they interrogate thoroughly, particularly for different groups of pupils. They know where progress is slow and challenge how it is being tackled.
- The principal has high expectations. She has disseminated her aspirations throughout the school and they are shared by teachers and support staff. Middle leaders commented on how teachers have raised their expectations of what pupils can do.
- The principal and her deputy monitor the quality of teaching frequently, both formally and informally. They have a strong presence around the school. The senior and middle leaders monitor children's progress from the work in their books and in regular pupil progress meetings. The information is used when planning teachers' professional development. The training and support is tailored to improve individual's teaching. Teachers are then held to account for their pupils' progress.
- Over the past year, the role of the middle leader has been developed. Middle leaders support their colleagues effectively. They are knowledgeable about their subjects and understand the implications of using assessment to identify areas of weakness to make improvements. For example, assessment revealed that the weak recall of number facts and 'times tables' knowledge was holding pupils back. Daily quick-fire mental maths was introduced and this has had a beneficial impact on outcomes.
- In the last academic year, there was a dip in reading and writing progress for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities which was not picked up quickly enough. However, leaders have a better understanding of information now, which means that any decline is improved rapidly.
- One of the many changes made in the last academic year was an overhaul of the curriculum. It is broader, more balanced and meets pupils' needs better.
- The school provides many enrichment activities and opportunities. An example is 'Young Voices', where the choir sings with pupils from other schools.
- The sport premium additional funding is spent on providing additional opportunities for pupils and training for staff. More than half the pupils take part in after-school sports each week, and pupils who would benefit from attending are helped to do so.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strong feature of this school. Pupils have the opportunity to think deeply during their philosophy lessons and through reflection time in assembly. Pupils' social development is evident from their confidence and respect for others around the school. Pupils are very proud of their celebrity visitors. One was Andy Lewis, a gold medal-winning Paralympian whom they regard as one of their own and from whom they learn about aspiration and

perseverance. The school council is developing links with a local special school for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

- Pupils have a good understanding of British values. They know what democracy means and have opportunities to vote in school. Pupils held a mock election for 'Brexit' at the same time as the national one. Pupils know that laws are important and like the fact that they develop their own class rules. They were able to tell an inspector about the rules and why they are important. Pupils are taught about different faiths and talk about them respectfully. Pupils have visited a mosque and Gloucester Cathedral. This has helped them to understand the differences between Christianity and the Islamic faith. Pupils consider equality to be very important. Recently, older pupils had a lively debate about gender equality during a philosophy lesson.
- The school has received effective support from the academy trust, particularly for leadership and teaching. Senior and middle leaders commented that developing relationships with other schools through the Diocese of Gloucester Academy Trust has helped them to improve teaching and raise expectations.
- The pupil premium is used effectively to support pupils academically and socially so that they progress as swiftly as other pupils. Specific individual and small group work are successful in helping disadvantaged pupils.

Governance of the school

- Governance of the school is good. Governors understand the strengths of the school and, in partnership with the principal, have correctly identified priorities for the future. They benchmark themselves against other schools within the trust and have undertaken external moderation.
- Governors understand the school's data and use it to hold the school to account.
- Governors take responsibility for monitoring the progress of groups of pupils and can explain how pupil premium money is spent to support disadvantaged pupils. They can explain the impact on pupil achievement and progress.
- Governors work well in partnership with school leaders and other staff. Subject leaders talk to the governors about progress in their subjects.
- School leaders keep the governing body well informed through reports and meetings. The principal is challenged on the information presented. Governors find out what is happening in school by visiting regularly and being linked through a class or subject.
- Governors understand their responsibilities for safeguarding pupils and have undertaken safeguarding training.
- There is a governor responsible for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. This governor has had additional training and has a secure understanding of their specific needs.
- Recently, the chair of the governing body met with pupils to find out what they had learned about British values. She then reported her findings back to the rest of the governing body.
- The process of managing the performance of the principal is rigorous, as is the process

for the performance management of teachers. Appropriate targets are set to improve the school further.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The school fulfils its safeguarding duties well and the welfare of pupils is at the heart of its work. Record-keeping is detailed.
- The single central record is up to date and includes all the required information.
- Staff and governors are trained in keeping children safe.
- The school checks that all adults who work with children are suitable to do so.
- The school buildings are safe and well maintained. At playtimes and lunchtimes there is a good level of adult supervision.
- Adults have had safeguarding training and know how to report their concerns.
- Vulnerable children are well supported and records are kept assiduously.
- The principal and chair of the governing body undertake an annual safeguarding audit and form an action plan. This is revisited twice during the year.
- Pupils are taught to stay safe online in ways appropriate to their age. Older pupils talk confidently about the importance of not giving away personal information and about grooming.
- The relevant policies are up to date. They are on the school's website, with details of whom to contact if there are concerns.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The school has regular, robust systems for assessing pupils' progress. These are used to inform planning and address weaknesses in performance as they arise. Teachers are confident that their assessments are correct because they are moderated across the academy trust.
- In most classes, work is pitched at an appropriate level. This enables pupils to make good progress. Pupils said that the work 'makes them think'. Where teaching is less strong and expectations are too low, pupils are given work that is not challenging and this slows their learning.
- In Reception and key stage 1, pupils are taught well-planned, structured phonics lessons. This has a positive effect on reading in key stage 1 and key stage 2 because pupils have benefited from phonics teaching throughout their time in school.
- In view of historic low attainment in reading, pupils have their reading checked regularly so that their reading books are closely linked to their stage of development. All pupils have reading records, and scrutiny of these showed that, in addition to reading regularly at home, pupils read regularly to an adult in school. This includes older fluent readers, who are encouraged to develop a more sophisticated comprehension of the text.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge, particularly in the core subjects of English and

mathematics. For example, in mathematics they share technical language with the pupils so that pupils understand fully what they are learning.

- Pupils enjoy a varied curriculum and their teachers plan interesting lessons and activities. Teachers ensure that other subjects, such as topic work and science, are taught rigorously and are pitched at an appropriately high level. The inspectors observed pupils discussing a science investigation from the previous day and this led to an in-depth conversation about electricity. Pupils in Year 5 enjoyed learning about the Victorians. They spoke eloquently and perceptively about life in the workhouse and about what they had learned about Victorian times from reading 'Oliver Twist'.
- Teachers give effective feedback, both orally and in writing, so that pupils know what they need to do to make their work better. Teachers' feedback was commented on positively by pupils, who said that marking in their books helps them to improve.
- Teachers' management of behaviour is good. It results in positive attitudes towards learning and pupils being fully engaged with their work.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Welfare arrangements are good. Vulnerable pupils are well cared for. If there are any concerns about a pupil's welfare or safety, this is followed up rigorously. The school arranges transport to school for those pupils who have difficulty getting there. There is a nurture club and a team of adults available to offer support.
- Disadvantaged pupils said that they are supported well and helped to reach their full potential. Recently, a national charity which helps schools to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils has been working with these pupils. However, this partnership has not been in place long enough for its effectiveness to be demonstrated.
- Pupils are confident that they can approach any adult in school if they have concerns. They know about external safeguarding agencies as a spokesperson from the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) visited the school.
- Pupils spoke to the inspector about Childline. Pupils told the inspectors that they are kept safe at school and they feel safe in all areas of the building and grounds. Pupils told the inspector that there was no bullying and they were confident that if there were any incidents, adults would help them.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Playtimes and lunchtimes are calm, happy times. Play leaders and the sports coach organise games and activities which pupils enjoy. Older pupils help younger children without being asked. For example, older pupils were seen helping in the lunch hall and one held a heavy door open for a small child.
- Pupils move around the school and between activities in an orderly manner.
- Pupils are polite and respectful to adults and each other. 'Please' and 'thank you' at

lunchtime were heard regularly. The lead inspector was asked on two separate occasions if she was having a nice day and she was also offered a pupil's chair.

- Behaviour in lessons is good and pupils know that they are expected to get on with their work. Pupils at this school are used to talking about their work in lessons. Classrooms are rather noisy sometimes, but the discussion is about their learning in the main.
- Pupils understand the behavioural system and can explain the rewards and sanctions system. They feel that it is fair.
- Attendance is lower than the national average. However, the school supports a group of pupils who have complex needs and require time away from school for medical reasons. When this is taken into account, attendance is in line with the national average for all pupils. Unexplained absence is followed up immediately, usually with a phone call but, if required, by a visit to the child's home by school staff.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Children enter school with skills and knowledge typical for their age. They make good progress in the Reception Class and, by the time they move on to Year 1, a higher than average proportion have reached a good level of development for their age. More girls than boys reach a good level of development, but both groups are higher than the national average. Thus, children are well prepared for the curriculum in key stage 1.
- Pupils attained well in the most recent 2016 Year 1 phonics screening check, where pupils' knowledge of the sounds that letters make are assessed. More pupils reached the expected standard than the national average.
- At the end of key stage 1, pupils take assessments in reading and mathematics and are assessed by their teachers in writing. More pupils at Primrose Hill Academy reached the expected standard in all three subjects than found in most schools nationally. A much higher proportion of pupils were working at a standard higher than expected for their age.
- At the end of key stage 2, fewer pupils reached the expected standard in the combined scores of reading, writing, mathematics and the grammar, punctuation and spelling tests than nationally.
- However, a higher proportion than nationally were working above the expected standards in reading at the end of key stage 2. The proportion of pupils working above the expected standard in grammar, punctuation and spelling was the same as the national average. A smaller than average proportion of pupils were working above the expected standard in writing and mathematics.
- Although attainment at the end of key stage 2 was not high, pupils made good progress from their low starting points at the end of key stage 1. The difference between these results and others nationally successfully diminished in reading, writing and mathematics. This shows that the previous legacy of slow progress has been tackled and has enabled pupils to catch up.
- The school's own tracking of assessment shows that last year's progress was accelerated in nearly all classes, and this was supported by a scrutiny of pupils' workbooks.

- There are too few disadvantaged pupils to comment on the achievement and progress of this group in individual classes, as pupils could be identified. However, across the school, disadvantaged pupils, in nearly all classes, are making good progress. Their progress is similar to or faster than that of other pupils in reading, writing and mathematics. Disadvantaged pupils told an inspector that they are well supported and are expected to achieve their best.
- The most able pupils are making good progress and working at a high level. In both key stages 1 and 2, the most able pupils attained well in the end of key stage tests and assessments.
- Pupils who need to catch up quickly are well supported and their progress is tracked closely by the school.
- More girls than boys attained the expected standard in reading, writing, mathematics and the grammar punctuation and spelling test at the end of key stage 2, but boys made more progress in reading and mathematics.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities made slow progress in reading and writing in 2016. Progress in mathematics was better. The school identified this problem and put strategies in place in the summer term. As a result, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are making much better progress.

Early years provision

Good

- Pupils get off to a good start in the Reception class.
- The Reception class teacher, who is also the deputy principal, leads her team very well. She ensures that the arrangements for children starting school help them to settle quickly. Children and their parents become familiar with the setting and routines before they start. There are very good links with the privately run on-site nursery and with other local providers. This helps the children have a smooth transition into school. The teacher ensures that all staff have high expectations of behaviour and of what children are capable of achieving.
- Parents have confidence in the reception staff and find them very approachable. Parents appreciate the good communication with the school and the opportunity to learn about phonics so that they can help their children. Parents commented positively about how welcoming the Reception staff are, particularly if they want to visit to see how their child is progressing or to discuss their progress.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good. Children are assessed as soon as they start school to see what they can do already, and then regularly throughout the year. The Reception team tracks children's progress and gives extra help if it is required.
- Language development is promoted well by all Reception staff. They listen carefully to children and take every opportunity to have extended conversations, for example asking questions or seeking a child's opinion.
- There are good outcomes for pupils at the end of the year. Children make good progress socially and academically. They develop their communication skills well and use their knowledge of phonics to read familiar books. Children play alongside each

other and balance and climb with confidence. Consequently, they are well prepared for their transition into key stage 1.

- There are very few disadvantaged children in Reception, but staff know them well and ensure that each child who is disadvantaged receives additional support.
- Children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make rapid progress from their different starting points. They are given additional support before starting school. For example, children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities have extra visits to help them settle and are given photographs of the school so that they develop familiarity with the setting. The school liaises well with agencies that support children.
- Personal development, behaviour and welfare are good. Children learn the daily routines quickly and are attentive in whole-class activities. They are taught to be independent when choosing activities and resources and demonstrate that they can share and take turns.
- Arrangements for safeguarding children are good, as they are in the rest of the school.

School details

Unique reference number	139643
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	10019929

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	223
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Louise Goode
Principal	Victoria Henson
Telephone number	01594843453
Website	www.primrosehillcofeacademy.org.uk
Email address	admin@primrosehill.gloucs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with DfE guidance on what academies should publish.
- Primrose Hill Church of England Primary School became an academy on the 1 October 2013 and is part of the Diocese of Gloucester Academy Trust.
- The current principal was appointed on 1 September 2014. She followed a temporary executive principal, who was in post for one year. The principal has received support from the trust.
- This academy is a similar size to most primary schools.
- Most pupils are taught in single year group classes, although Years 5 and 6 are mixed-year groups.

- A majority of the pupils are of White British heritage, with just a few pupils coming from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds. A very small number speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is slightly lower than found in most schools, but the school does have a small number of pupils with complex medical needs.
- A smaller than average proportion of pupils join or leave the school within the school year.
- In 2015, the school met the government's floor standard, which is the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress at the end of Year 6.
- The school runs a breakfast club on-site from 8am every school day.
- There is a privately run nursery on-site. This did not form part of the inspection.

Information about this inspection

- This is the first inspection of Primrose Hill Church of England Primary Academy since it became an academy.
- The inspectors observed 13 lessons or parts of lessons. They also watched group sessions and individual support given to pupils to help them catch up with reading.
- The inspectors listened to pupils read.
- The inspectors looked at pupils' work in books for 2015/16 and also at the work pupils have completed this academic year.
- Meetings were held with governors, middle and senior leaders, representatives from the Diocese of Gloucester Academy Trust and groups of pupils. Individual conversations also took place with parents and pupils.
- The inspectors took account of 52 responses to Parent View, the government's online questionnaire, and had several conversations with parents.
- Inspectors looked at 25 responses to the staff questionnaire and 45 responses to the pupil survey.
- The inspectors looked at a wide range of school documents, including the school's self-evaluation and plan for improvement. They looked at evidence of tracking pupils' progress throughout the school.
- A variety of documents relating to safeguarding was scrutinised.

Inspection team

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Ofsted Inspector

Dawn Breeze

Ofsted Inspector

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