

Pollyplatt Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120472
Local Authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	380035
Inspection dates	22–23 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Andrew Clark

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	116
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lesley Wosley
Headteacher	John Beaven
Date of previous school inspection	20 May 2009
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors observed teaching and learning in nine lessons and parts of lessons led by five teachers. They held meetings with representatives of the governing body, the staff, parents and carers, and groups of pupils. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation and essential policies including those for safeguarding, the school improvement plan, information about pupils' progress and attainment data. They analysed 22 completed questionnaires from parents and carers, as well as questionnaires completed by staff and Key Stage 2 pupils.

The inspectors reviewed many aspects of the school's work. They looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The progress that the more-able pupils make in their written work.
- The degree to which pupils are involved in assessing and improving their own learning.
- The extent to which pupils use their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills in other subjects.
- How effectively all school leaders contribute to school improvement.

Information about the school

Pollyplatt is smaller than the average primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average. The majority of pupils are from White British families. The school is adjacent to RAF Scampton and a significant number of the pupils are from military families. As a consequence of regular postings, a much higher proportion of pupils than usual do not spend their full primary education in this one school. The school has achieved several awards including the Green Eco School award, Healthy School Status and an International Schools award.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school. Children get off to an excellent start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and make good progress through the rest of the school. The outstanding care, guidance and support pupils receive, particularly the very effective systems to welcome new pupils, contribute significantly to pupils' exemplary behaviour and above-average levels of attendance. The clarity of vision of the headteacher, with good support from senior and middle leaders, ensures that pupils of all abilities are eager to learn and achieve well. The governing body fulfils its responsibilities well. Thorough and systematic self-evaluation procedures draw effectively on the views of staff, pupils, parents and carers. As a result, the school has developed well since it was previously inspected and has a good capacity for further improvement.

The school is successful in helping pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, to make good progress and reach challenging targets. Attainment is average in English and mathematics by time they leave school at the end of Year 6. Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe from harm. They are extremely friendly and considerate towards each other and have a strong understanding of right and wrong. Pupils have a good knowledge of how to live a healthy lifestyle. They make an outstanding contribution to the life of the school and wider community through many opportunities to take responsibility in roles such as school and eco-councillors, peer mediators and play leaders.

The quality of teaching is good overall. It is sometimes outstanding. Relationships are excellent and teachers make learning challenging through the stimulating use of ICT, drama and games. Very occasionally, lessons do not start with their usual brisk and exciting pace and pupils are not always given the opportunity to clearly articulate and develop their thoughts about their learning. This limits the opportunity for them to make the very best progress. Teachers make good use of marking. All groups of pupils are engaged by a curriculum which meets their different needs well through interesting themes and topics. However, opportunities for pupils to use and apply their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects are less well established.

Teachers know individual pupils extremely well and track their progress very carefully. Exceptionally robust record-keeping contributes to the outstanding procedures for caring for pupils and effective systems for keeping them safe. The comment, 'This is a fantastic school. I couldn't be happier,' fairly reflects parents and carers' positive views.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of good and outstanding teaching in order to hasten pupils' progress, by:
 - providing regular opportunities in lessons for pupils to speak confidently and cogently about their learning
 - ensuring lessons start in brisk and exciting ways which grab and sustain pupils' interest and motivation.

- Raise attainment by making full use of opportunities across different subjects for pupils to select and apply their literacy and numeracy skills and initiate their own ideas.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils enjoy school and take pride in their work. They read fluently and accurately with good levels of comprehension. Writing is often interesting and pupils of all abilities write with imagination for a wide range of purposes. They enjoy working independently or with others and make good use of different sources of reference such as 'learning walls', dictionaries and computers. They spell accurately and use punctuation well. This is a good improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils make good progress in developing mental calculation skills. They use protractors and other mathematical equipment accurately. However, their basic literacy and numeracy skills are not fully developed because they do not have enough opportunities to make decisions about which skills to apply in their work in other subjects. Pupils' involvement in assessing and improving their own work is good overall, but they do not always explain their understanding of their own learning clearly. This slows the development of critical and speaking skills. Overall, however, pupils' learning skills contribute to their good progress and future well-being.

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are generally below the levels expected nationally for their age. Pupils of all abilities make good progress in writing and mathematics through Key Stages 1 and 2. They make particularly good progress in reading to reach above average standards in this aspect. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and pupils at risk of failure make good progress because of very well-planned interventions and excellent care, guidance and support. More-able pupils rise to challenging targets based on teachers' sharp use of progress data. This has redressed a slight dip in the standards of their written work and mathematics, as reflected in trends in the results of national tests and a range of assessments. Both boys and girls achieve well because they are fully engaged by the rich curriculum.

Pupils show great kindness and consideration towards each other and are very attentive to adults and other children. They make an excellent contribution to

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mentoring and supporting new pupils who start school at different points in the year. The well-trained peer mentors help the school to achieve excellent standards of behaviour. The eco- and school councils initiate a wide range of successful fundraising and other activities, often with the military community. They take their roles such as chairperson or treasurer of the council very seriously. Pupils are competitive and successful in a good range of physical activities. In particular, a high proportion of pupils cycle or scooter regularly to school.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils’ learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils’ behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Expectations are high for all abilities and pupils strive hard to meet them. This is often evident in the displays of good-quality and imaginative written and other work that enriches classrooms. The quality of teaching ranges from satisfactory to outstanding and is largely good. Teachers make good use of precise targets for pupils to achieve during each lesson. Very occasionally, the presentation of the targets and success criteria at the start of the lesson are routine and not exciting enough, and this undermines the excitement and pace of subsequent activities. Teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to read familiar and unfamiliar texts during lessons, and this promotes higher standards well. Occasionally, however, teachers do not challenge pupils sufficiently to explain their thinking and understanding of their learning clearly enough to others. The quality of marking and feedback is good and sometimes excellent.

Overall the curriculum is good. A range of interesting topics, including whole-school

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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themes such as Egypt and the Second World War, make learning practical and meaningful to all groups of pupils. Increasingly strong links between subjects give pupils opportunities to apply their literacy and numeracy skills in different contexts. However, pupils are rarely given the opportunity to initiate their own ideas and decide which skills are most appropriate to the task. There is good provision for promoting pupils’ understanding of environmental and sustainable issues. A good range of extra-curricular activities, sometimes in partnership with other schools or sporting organisations, enrich pupils’ personal and physical development. The provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well planned, as are opportunities for those with a gift or a talent. Pupils have good opportunities to learn another language and participate in musical and dramatic activities. Good links with local churches and other institutions contribute to many aspects of pupils’ spiritual and moral development.

The school has outstanding systems to support pupils whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable, underpinned by very thorough tracking and analysis of pupils’ achievement and excellent record keeping with good use of external professional support where appropriate. The procedures for ensuring pupils’ smooth transition through and beyond school are extremely well planned.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils’ needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and senior leaders have established systematic and thorough procedures to monitor and evaluate all aspects of the school’s work and rigorously plan for improvement. Staff morale is high. The thoroughness and enthusiasm of all staff to share best practice are embedded in most aspects of its work. Rigorous monitoring of performance and well-planned professional development have led to sharply-focused improvements, with only a few relatively weaker aspects of provision to be resolved. All staff are ambitious for the school and well prepared. For example, all teaching assistants hold higher-level qualifications. The school is supported by an efficient and effective governing body, working in close partnership with school leaders. They have increasingly developed a good range of initiatives to fulfil their role in challenging school performance, particularly the regular attendance of the Chair of the Governing Body at senior management meetings.

The commitment of parents and carers to the life of the school is good. They have every confidence in the management of the school and, as a result, give time,

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energy and resources to its development. They make a good contribution to pupils’ learning through their involvement in school activities and the use of homework. They are well informed through the headteacher’s newsletters and other information on the school’s website.

The school has a good understanding of its immediate context and has developed links with contrasting communities in Britain and abroad since the previous inspection. Its commitment to sustainability also contributes to good promotion of community cohesion. The school promotes equality of opportunity well. Although progress very occasionally varies in lessons, there is no overall difference in the progress of different groups of pupils. Both pupils and staff take all necessary steps to avoid any discrimination. The rigorous systems to vet staff’s suitability to work with children, assess risk and ensure health and safety are frequently reviewed. The school provides effective financial management and ensures that it gives good value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

The knowledge and enthusiasm of the outstanding Early Years Foundation Stage leader, combined with very strong teamwork, ensure that children of all abilities, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make outstanding progress from their individual starting points. There has been a very good trend of improvement since the previous inspection. Children often start school with especially limited communication and writing skills. Extremely effective induction systems support children, along with their parents and carers, to ensure a smooth start. The systems to monitor progress and to plan accurately for children’s future needs are thorough and very effective. Children feel extremely safe and are supported by very

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robust welfare arrangements. The quality of teaching and use of assessment are outstanding. A very good balance between adult-led activities and those that children choose for themselves contributes well to all areas of learning. Activities are exciting and meaningful. For example, children are constantly challenged to plan and review what they are doing, including making up their own ball games and drawing maps for their vehicle rides. Early letter recognition and mark-making skills are taught extremely well and children make rapid progress in developing these skills. The outdoor area fully reflects the exciting indoor opportunities. Children really enjoy participation in vast craft activities such as the giant papier-mâché rocket they journey to the moon in! The classroom is full of colour, and role-play and song to bring learning to life. Children and staff make excellent use of a wide range of ICT resources to develop basic skills and learn more about the world around them. As a result of these experiences, children thoroughly enjoy themselves and are very well prepared for their next stage of education.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

About a fifth of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire, which is fewer than usual. Other parents and carers offered their views in letters and discussions. All those contributing were very supportive of the school. They particularly commented on their children’s enjoyment of learning and that they are kept safe. They feel that staff are helpful and approachable and that the school is well led. No significant concerns were raised.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Pollyplatt Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 22 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 116 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	15	68	7	32	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	18	82	4	18	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	15	68	7	32	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	13	59	8	36	1	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	12	55	10	45	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	11	50	8	36	3	14	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	16	73	5	23	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	13	59	6	27	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	15	68	5	23	2	9	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	10	45	10	45	1	5	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	14	64	8	36	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	16	73	6	27	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	18	82	4	18	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 8 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



24 November 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Pollyplatt Primary School, Lincoln, LN1 2TP

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave the inspectors when we visited your school recently. We really enjoyed talking to you and hearing your views, and seeing you in your lessons and at playtimes.

You go to a good school. These are some of the things we liked most.

- You make an excellent start to learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- The headteacher, staff and the governing body work well together to make your school the best it can be.
- You make good progress through the school thanks to good teaching.
- The school takes outstanding care of you and your behaviour is excellent.
- Your attendance is above average.
- You make an outstanding contribution to the school through your roles on the school council, eco-council and through the many other jobs you do.
- You enjoy your lessons and teachers give you practical and fun things to learn about.

To help your school become even better, I have asked your headteacher and the governing body to improve two things.

- Help you to make even more progress, by ensuring that teachers always start lessons quickly and interestingly, and encourage you more to talk clearly and fully about your learning.
- Ensure that your work in different subjects always helps you improve your basic skills, such as literacy and numeracy skills.

You can help by always trying your best, speaking sensibly about your work and continuing to enjoy and attend school.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Clark
Lead inspector

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