

# Putnoe Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	109496
<b>Local authority</b>	Bedford
<b>Inspection number</b>	395477
<b>Inspection dates</b>	22–23 May 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Andrew Saunders

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	425
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Debra Brock
<b>Headteacher</b>	Gillian Peck
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	22 January 2008
<b>School address</b>	Church Lane Bedford MK41 0DH
<b>Telephone number</b>	01234 303400
<b>Fax number</b>	01234 303401
<b>Email address</b>	putnoeprimary@schools.bedfordshire.gov.uk

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	22–23 May 2012
<b>Inspection number</b>	395477



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## Introduction

Inspection team

Andrew Saunders

Additional Inspector

Kanwaljit Singh

Additional Inspector

Raymond Biglin

Additional Inspector

Clementina Ogunsanwo

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 31 lessons taught by 17 teachers. Observations totalled 14 hours. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, teachers and members of the governing body; inspectors also spoke to parents and carers informally. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at: documents analysing the performance of pupils; the school's self evaluation; systems to track the progress of pupils; records monitoring the quality of teaching and learning; and minutes from meetings. The 80 inspection questionnaires completed by parents and carers, as well as those completed by pupils and staff, were analysed.

## Information about the school

This is a larger-than-average primary school formed in September 2011, when the lower school took over the Year 5 and 6 from the middle school to become a primary school. After refurbishment, the school relocated to the middle school site. The lower school was previously graded outstanding; the middle school was previously graded inadequate and required special measures. Shortly prior to the amalgamation, the headteacher took over as executive headteacher of the middle school.

The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is double the national average. The proportion of pupils with statements of special educational needs is broadly average; the proportion of pupils supported by school action plus is below average. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage; there are a wide range of other heritages represented. More pupils than usual speak English as an additional language with 25 different languages represented. The school meets the current floor standard which sets the minimum standards expected by the government. The Early Years Foundation Stage comprises a Nursery class and three Reception classes. Year 1 has three classes; other year groups currently have two classes. Among the awards the school has gained are Artsmark Gold award and the Investors in People Gold award. The school runs a breakfast club and after-school club.

**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

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>1</b>

## Key findings

- This is an outstanding school because the headteacher and leaders have implemented an exciting vision for the school, brought about rapid improvements in teaching, raised achievement to outstanding, and dramatically improved behaviour.
- Attainment has risen and is broadly average by the end of Year 6, although attainment in reading has not risen quite as quickly as in mathematics. Overall, this represents outstanding progress from pupils' low starting points so that achievement is outstanding. The Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 have consolidated their previously outstanding achievement.
- A relentless focus on professional development and emphasis on the highest expectations means that teaching has improved quickly. Previous inadequate teaching has been eliminated and much of the teaching is now outstanding and never less than good. Assessment is extensive and is used accurately to ensure that work is carefully planned to match pupils' needs and challenges them consistently.
- The behaviour of older pupils was previously an issue, but the rapid improvements in the teaching, the curriculum and in teachers' expectations of pupils mean that their behaviour is now outstanding. All pupils demonstrate excellent attitudes to learning and work cooperatively to tackle challenging tasks. They like being at school and, for almost all pupils, their attendance has improved and is above average.
- The exceptional leadership of the headteacher, underpinned by strong support from leaders at all levels, has developed and implemented a robust vision for the school. Staff have worked hard to ensure there is a consistent approach across all year groups; the sense of a cohesive community is impressive in such a short time. The vibrant, innovative approach to the curriculum ensures that learning is placed within realistic contexts and pupils are keen to stretch

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themselves to reach ambitious targets. It also promotes well the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils.

## **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Raise attainment in reading at Key Stage 2, within a year, to match that in mathematics, by encouraging pupils to read more widely in their own time.

## **Main report**

### **Achievement of pupils**

During the inspection, lessons observed show that pupils typically make rapid progress and produce work of impressive quality, particularly in writing and mathematics. As a result, attainment has risen quickly at Key Stage 2; while broadly average, it is slightly above national figures. Lessons proceed at an excellent pace and pupils are enthusiastic about learning. For example, Year 4 pupils enjoyed planning a party, using their numeracy skills and sharing their work with another class. They helped identify the criteria to clarify whether they had achieved the aims of the lesson, a common feature of lessons which helps ensure the excellent progress. The robust systems to record and analyse the performance of pupils are used exceptionally well to ensure that all groups of pupils are given work that meets their particular needs. When they join the school in Nursery, most children have skills and knowledge which are below those expected for their age. This is similar for those joining the school in the Reception class, with some children's development delayed by more than a year. The strong focus on developing positive attitudes to learning and extremely high expectations of the well-skilled staff means that these pupils make rapid progress, and have made up considerable ground by the time they reach Year 1. Outstanding progress continues through the school.

There is a consistent, systematic approach to teaching reading, through the linking of sounds and letters (phonics), although this is more recent in the older year groups. Consequently, attainment in reading is above average at Key Stage 1. The new library and improving attitudes to learning mean that skills in reading are broadly average and improving for older pupils. Positive experiences of reading are very recent for older pupils and are still developing.

Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are well supported so that they, too, make outstanding progress. Pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties are helped to understand what they may be experiencing, and to consider more positive ways of dealing with their feelings and impulses so that they can focus on their learning. As a result, they show excellent improvements in behaviour both in lessons and around the school.

### **Quality of teaching**

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Teachers have consistently high expectations of themselves and of the pupils. As a result, much of the teaching in all key stages is outstanding and is never less than good. Work in books and discussions with pupils show that this is now typical. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and share their expertise and passion for particular areas of learning, developing imaginative teaching strategies. Excellent teamwork between adults means that lessons are delivered with tremendous enthusiasm, ensuring that disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are fully engaged and supported. Staff unflinchingly evaluate the performance of pupils and ensure pupils are achieving their best, planning carefully to meet pupils' needs. For example, drama and role-play is used very effectively to provide experiences to enrich pupils' ideas for writing. Pupils demonstrate great independence because adults give them timely support while expecting them to find a way forward for themselves. Pupils show enthusiasm for the topics they study and require little prompting to improve their work. Teachers and teaching assistants make excellent use of probing questions to check understanding, readily adapting explanations or the tasks given to pupils.

Literacy, numeracy and communication skills are put into realistic contexts because the carefully thought-out curriculum is innovative and well planned to ensure the progression of skills. Pupils rave about the 'entry-point' days when they start a new topic, as well as the 'exit-point' days when they celebrate all they have learnt. This successfully promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils show great responsibility when assessing their own and each other's work, identifying 'two stars and a wish' to help each other improve. Marking in books is very effective because of the specific advice on how to improve, which pupils respond to diligently. For example, a pupil who had every calculation correct was given more complex ones to do; he commented how much he liked this challenge. Parents and carers responding to the inspection questionnaire almost all agreed that teaching is good and many parents and carers commented on the dedication and availability of the staff.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Pupils have quickly responded to the new systems for managing behaviour and the high expectations of all adults. During the inspection, pupils showed excellent attitudes towards one another and were extremely well behaved. Reviews of records about behaviour and discussions with pupils, parents and carers show that this is now typical. Pupils acknowledge that there are still very occasional incidents, but that these are dealt with so quickly and robustly that they are diminishing. The work of the nurture group is exemplary towards helping those pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties to change their behaviour and cope with the difficulties they face. Pupils are very well informed about a wide range of different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying, and know what they can do to tackle it if it does occur. They say it is now rare. They know how to keep themselves safe, for example when using the internet or around the roads. Improvements to the site mean that pupils feel safe, and say that they are very proud to be part of such a

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great school. Almost all parents and carers agreed that behaviour is good; many commented how much it has improved, especially for older pupils. Pupils say they feel privileged to have wonderful resources, such as the media centre. This means they like being at school, as demonstrated in their improved attendance. Pupils who attend the breakfast or after-school club speak highly of the activities available and say it helps them to start or end the day positively. In particular, they like the opportunity to access their learning via the laptops provided.

## **Leadership and management**

From the time she took over as executive headteacher of both schools, the headteacher and senior leaders have worked extremely hard to bring about a united learning community with the highest aspirations for every pupil. They have been tremendously successful in this and the leap in overall attainment, the outstanding progress of pupils, the increase in attendance, and outstanding teaching all attest to this. The expansion to include Years 5 and 6, and the transfer to the new site, have been undertaken sensitively. The creative project about inter-planetary travel, to find a new site for their 'dying planet', meant pupils were closely involved in thinking about the new site, which made the eventual move an exciting one filled with possibilities. Leaders at all levels and the governing body have been relentless in their pursuit of providing high quality learning opportunities which lead to outstanding outcomes for pupils.

Excellent leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage means that this aspect is a strength of the school and provides pupils with an excellent start to their learning journey. Monitoring of teaching by senior leaders is robust; any teaching that is less than good has been tackled and clear strategies implemented to ensure it improves. Sharing of best practice is widespread, particularly ensuring the approach to teaching phonics is consistent. The school has shown itself to be a leader in developing an engaging and highly effective curriculum. As a result, pupils are confident using their literacy and numeracy skills in widely varying contexts. For example, Year 6 pupils aim to produce the same level of writing in a personal, social and health education lesson as they do in English lessons. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are fully engaged in all aspects of school life because adults and pupils value the successes and development of each individual.

Members of the governing body have been instrumental in the successful transformation of the school and have provided extensive support during a period of such intense change. Together with the headteacher and all the staff, members of the governing body ensure that arrangements for keeping pupils safe are robust and meet statutory requirements. School leaders and members of the governing body take seriously their responsibility to promote equality and tackle discrimination. This is demonstrated in the celebrations of the successes of all and the harmonious relationships during break times. While the headteacher requires little challenge, members of the governing body have an excellent understanding of the data about the performance of groups of pupils and actively hold the school to account. The extensive, accurate analysis of data by school leaders, alongside the rapid rise in

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outcomes for pupils, confirms the exceptional capacity to continue the trend of improvement.



## 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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

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

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**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 May 2012

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of Putnoe Primary School, Bedford, MK41 0DH**

We would like to thank you for showing us the learning you were doing and making us so welcome while we were in your school. We were very impressed with how well you behave and how polite and kind you are to each other and to visitors. We have judged that your school is outstanding. These are some of the things we found.

- The headteacher and other staff have made sure that the change into a primary school has gone smoothly and many of you told us how much you like the new school. We could see how well you all get along with one another already.
- Teaching has improved very quickly and is now often outstanding and always at least good. Teachers make sure that they know a lot about how well you are doing and they use this to plan work that is interesting. They are very good at asking just the right questions to get you thinking hard.
- You get lots of opportunities to think about how well you have developed the skills or knowledge you should, and help to decide what specific things will show this by the end of each lesson.
- You are able to do very challenging work and many of you told us how much you enjoy this. As a result, you make excellent progress and, by the end of Year 6, your results in national tests are slightly better than other pupils, particularly in writing and mathematics. You can be very proud of what you have achieved.

Even though it is an outstanding school, the headteacher and other staff want to make it even better. We have asked them to help older pupils to do even better in their reading, as you do in mathematics, by encouraging you to read a wider range of books in your own time. You can help by looking for some books that are different to those you might usually read, and thinking about what you learn from them.

Above all you should continue to enjoy learning and help each other to do the very best work you can, so that your school continues to be such a great place to learn.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Saunders  
Lead inspector

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