

Poppleton Road Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121281
Local authority	York
Inspection number	380202
Inspection dates	10–11 May 2012
Lead inspector	Anthony Kingston

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	381
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Steve Milner
Headteacher	Debbie Glover
Date of previous school inspection	15 July 2008
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Introduction

Inspection team

Anthony Kingston	Additional inspector
Freda Jackson	Additional inspector
Moira Fitzpatrick	Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The team observed 23 lessons taught by 14 teachers and held meetings with groups of pupils, members of the governing body and staff. They listened to pupils reading, and observed intervention groups and assemblies. Inspectors took account of the responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. They observed the school's work and looked at documentation, including improvement plans, school and national assessment data, school policies, monitoring records and procedures for the care and protection of pupils (safeguarding). They also analysed responses in the 114 questionnaires from parents and carers and those completed by pupils and staff.

Information about the school

Poppleton Road is larger than the average sized primary school. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is average. The number of pupils supported at School Action Plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is broadly average.

There have been significant staff changes since the previous inspection involving senior leaders, middle managers and teachers. The leadership structure has been reorganised, but not all of the positions will be filled until September 2012. The school did not meet the floor standards in 2011, which set the government's minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. The school has achieved the Healthy School status and the Basic Skills Quality Mark.

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	4
Achievement of pupils	4
Quality of teaching	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils	3
Leadership and management	4

Key Findings

- In accordance with section 13(3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement.
- The school’s overall effectiveness is not satisfactory because the quality of teaching and the leadership and management of the school are inadequate. This has led to pupils not making enough progress. Consequently, their achievement is inadequate. Attainment has declined since the school was last inspected to levels which are, by the end of Key Stage 2, well below average.
- Teaching is inadequate because too many lessons do not meet pupils’ differing needs. The teaching is not ambitious enough to raise pupils’ attainment. A small amount of teaching is good or outstanding, resulting in some accelerated progress, but much is only satisfactory or inadequate and this is not good enough to ensure that all pupils achieve as well as they should.
- Pupils feel safe in school. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is typically satisfactory. Many pupils show positive attitudes towards school and are willing to take on responsibilities. However, where lessons fail to excite and enthuse them, a few pupils become restless and lose concentration.
- The curriculum fails to meet the learning needs of different groups of pupils. It does not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to extend their skills in reading, writing and mathematics through other subjects. The thematic approach to curriculum planning provides opportunities for pupils to engage in topics which interest them and capture their imaginations. However, it is not challenging enough for pupils of different abilities.

- Leaders and managers at all levels have not done enough to tackle the key areas identified for improvement in the previous inspection. They have not taken swift action to improve the quality of teaching and manage performance. As a consequence, pupils have not progressed well enough and attainment has not risen. Support from the local authority is helping the school to understand its strengths and how it can overcome its weaknesses. This includes supporting the development of a comprehensive and strategic plan aimed at raising pupils' attainment. However, improvements remain fragile because of weaknesses in leadership and teaching.
- Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, especially in communication, language and literacy and in their personal, social and emotional development.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By July 2013, improve the quality of teaching so that it is at least good, and raise attainment to be at least in line with national averages by:
 - ensuring expectations are consistently high in all classes and for all pupils
 - providing activities and tasks that are challenging enough for pupils of all abilities
 - increasing the pace of learning, providing stimulating activities and avoiding lengthy introductions to lessons so that pupils maintain their interest and engage actively in their learning
 - using day-to-day assessments to adapt teachers' planning to meet pupils' learning needs
 - marking pupils' work consistently and clearly to identify strengths and areas for improvement, showing pupils how to improve their work and giving time for them to respond to feedback
 - deploying all teaching assistants effectively
 - ensuring teachers plan more purposeful opportunities for pupils to apply and develop their skills in writing, calculation and mathematics skills across the curriculum.
- Improve the effectiveness with which leaders and managers monitor teachers' performance and the learning and progress of pupils by:
 - establishing a more rigorous cycle of monitoring and evaluation of teachers' lesson planning
 - checking the progress that different groups of pupils are making by undertaking regular scrutiny of their workbooks and a termly analysis of assessment information
 - ensuring the assessments used to monitor pupils' progress are accurate
 - focusing lesson observations on the impact that teaching has on the learning and progress of different groups of pupils, and reflecting this emphasis in feedback to teachers
 - using the outcomes of monitoring to secure improvement in teaching and pupils' achievement
 - setting challenging targets, so an increasing proportion of pupils make or exceed two sub-levels of progress each year in reading, writing and mathematics
 - developing the skills of middle leaders so they can effectively monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning in their areas of responsibility.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils' achievement in Key Stages 1 and 2 is inadequate, despite the good start they make in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children typically enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and knowledge that are in line with those expected for their age. From these starting points they thrive in a vibrant and exciting environment and make good progress, particularly in communication, language and literacy. They reach or exceed the levels expected by the time they join Year 1. Children are curious and are keen to use the exciting resources in the Reception classes to investigate and experiment. For example, inspectors observed the children using tape measures when they were preparing to build a stable to house their hobby horses, and they also saw children making the most of opportunities to create mysterious potions in readiness for story-telling activities.

This good start is not built upon consistently or effectively in Key Stages 1 and 2. Consequently, pupils' progress is inconsistent and inadequate overall. Attainment at Key Stage 2 has fallen sharply year on year and is currently well below average. There are significant gaps in attainment between pupils at this school and all pupils nationally. In mathematics, pupils' learning and progress remain insecure. This is because pupils have too few opportunities to apply and use their mathematical and calculation skills in meaningful ways for example by completing challenging problem-solving activities. Pupils in some year groups are not provided with sufficient opportunities to write at length in different areas of the curriculum. Some writing activities that pupils are given as part of topic work are undemanding. Too many teachers accept written work which is of a lower standard in pupils' topic books than in their extended writing books and this slows down their progress.

Pupils' performance in reading is stronger than in writing. The systematic teaching of reading, the emphasis on improving pupils' skills in linking letters and sounds and the emphasis the school places on reading for pleasure are now leading to attainment in reading that is broadly average by the end of Years 2 and 6. This improvement is, however, fragile because some strategies promoted by the school are not consistently applied. For example, some guided reading sessions are insufficiently challenging and a number of pupils who read to inspectors also had books which were too easy for them. The exception was in Year 6. Here, more able pupils in particular read books which challenged and extended their skills, with many questioning the author's meaning and empathising with characters and discussing their actions.

Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make inadequate progress because of the variability in the quality of support they receive as they move through the school.

The vast majority of parents and carers who returned a questionnaire believe that their children are making good progress at school but inspection evidence shows that pupils' progress is inadequate.

Quality of teaching

The teaching is not strong enough to accelerate pupils' progress and raise their attainment. Too much is either satisfactory or inadequate. Insufficient good or better teaching is at the heart of pupils' inconsistent progress and their underachievement at the end of Key Stage 2.

In many lessons, the pace of learning is slow. Introductions are too long and activities are not well matched to pupils' abilities. This is because teachers do not always make good enough use of day-to-day assessments or information about pupils' previous progress. The limited challenge offered to pupils in most lessons is reflected in the inappropriate writing activities set by a few teachers in topic work. This work is often at a much lower level than the skills shown by pupils in other areas of their written work.

As lessons progress, teachers provide feedback on how well pupils are doing but the quality of their questioning does not always enable them to gauge learning and understanding or check any mistakes or misconceptions that may occur. Similarly, teachers' marking of pupils' work does not always identify precisely what pupils could do to improve their work or check whether they have acted upon previous advice.

The effectiveness of teaching assistants is variable. Examples of effective intervention and support were observed when teaching assistants were clear about their role in supporting pupils and promoting learning. In other classes, teaching assistants were too passive, which restricted the extent to which they supported teachers in accelerating the progress of all pupils, including those with disabilities or who have special educational needs.

In the small number of good or better lessons observed, teachers demonstrated high expectations through planned activities that were closely matched to pupils' abilities. In these lessons, teachers monitored progress closely by asking pupils searching questions to assess and extend learning.

The vast majority of parents and carers who returned a questionnaire consider that their children are well taught but inspection findings show teaching, overall, is inadequate.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Behaviour seen during the inspection and over time is satisfactory. In the best lessons behaviour and attitudes are positive but in less effective sessions the teaching or activities set did not capture pupils' interest and this led to pupils becoming bored and concentration being lost. There are marked differences in the views expressed by the small minority of parents and carers who commented on the behaviour of pupils in different year groups. Pupils play well together and almost all show consideration towards and respect for each other and adults. This reflects the views of most parents and carers, staff and pupils.

Pupils are proud of their school and they get on well with each other and the staff. They develop a sound social conscience and are eager to take on extra responsibilities, such as becoming a Year 6 buddy helping children who enter the Reception classes or being an active member of the school council. Pupils say they enjoy school and feel safe. All parents and carers agree that the school keeps their children safe. Pupils know they are well cared for and supported by all adults in school and they know that they can turn to staff for help when they need it. Following interviews and informal discussions with pupils it was clear to the inspection team that any type of bullying is rare. Pupils assert that on the rare occasions

that it does occur it is dealt with rapidly. Pupils speak knowledgeably about how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations. For example, they appreciate the time teachers take to promote the development of skills so that they can sort out differences and problems which occur in the playground. Pupils show particular maturity regarding how to protect themselves when using the internet and how to deal with cyber-bullying. Levels of attendance are in line with the national average.

Leadership and management

The quality of education provided by the school has declined since the last inspection. The school's leaders have been unable to prevent underachievement in both Key Stages 1 and 2 or to prevent the sharp and sustained decline in overall attainment by the end of Key Stage 2. This has been exacerbated by the disruption caused by significant staffing changes. Despite their good intentions to raise attainment and achieve the priorities they have set, leaders have been too slow to implement a focused and personalised programme of professional development. This is now underway and is intended to tackle the shortcomings in teaching that have been at the heart of declining standards. The intervention of the local authority, together with the support received from consultants and a local school, has begun to have a positive impact on provision. However, the failure to secure essential improvements without external support means that managers and leaders do not demonstrate the capacity to sustain improvement.

The school's ethos promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development satisfactorily. In some classes, for example in Year 6, teachers use literature to promote discussion about moral and ethical issues. For instance, a pupil reading *The Hunger Games* reflected thoughtfully and had a very clear understanding of the story's moral issues. The school is committed to combating discrimination and promoting equal opportunities but, because achievement is inadequate and too many pupils fail to reach their potential, the promotion of equal opportunities is inadequate.

The curriculum is broad and balanced but does not enable pupils to sufficiently develop and improve core skills in literacy and mathematics. It promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development by encouraging pupils to work together in a supportive and caring environment. The thematic approach to planning provides a range of topics which excite pupils' imaginations. However, it is not sufficiently well adapted to meet pupils' different needs or provide a secure framework for the acquisition of skills in reading, writing and mathematics across the school. The governing body is aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses but has not provided the challenge to school leaders that would secure enough improvement to the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. Governors recognise the need for rapid improvement and the need to continue to provide support along with greater challenge to the school's leadership. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements.

The leadership in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good and provision in this part of the school has been successfully developed.

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).

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.



14 May 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Poppleton Road Primary School, York, YO26 4UP

Thank you for the friendly welcome you gave the inspection team and for being so polite and kind when we inspected your school. We enjoyed meeting you and seeing you at work and play. We were particularly pleased that so many of you said that you enjoy school, that you found your lessons exciting and that you felt safe and secure because the adults in the school take good care of you.

Although we found things that the school does well we also found that there are many things that need to be improved. For that reason we have decided that your school requires 'special measures'. This means that your school will receive help to make the changes that are needed and will have visits from other inspectors to check on how well it is doing.

Here are some of the positive things we found about your school:

- those of you in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress
- most of you behave well and show respect and consideration for others
- teaching in some classes is good and sometimes outstanding.

To help your school to improve, we have asked the school's leaders to make sure that:

- teachers help you to make faster progress so that you reach the standards of which you are capable by giving you more opportunities to practise your literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects and by making sure that the work they give you is always at the right level for you all
- their plans to make the school better are quickly put into action and monitored carefully.

You can all help to make the school better by encouraging others not to interrupt you in class, by working hard and letting teachers know if the work is either too difficult or too easy.

Yours sincerely

Anthony Kingston
Lead Inspector

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