

Poolsbrook Primary School

Cottage Close, Poolsbrook, Chesterfield, S43 3LF

Inspection dates 19–20 September 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- From starting points that are below average, pupils make good progress. Their attainment in English and mathematics is average by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils are taught well. Work challenges them highly because tasks are carefully matched to their capabilities and because teachers explain things well and make their expectations clear. Pupils apply themselves well in lessons.
- Behaviour is good. Teachers' expectations are high and pupils understand routines and procedures very clearly. The school's behaviour policy is straightforward and is consistently applied.
- Pupils feel safe in school. They do not fear bullying or any kind of harassment.
- The school is led and managed well. The quality of teaching is closely monitored, and changes since the previous inspection have been successful in raising pupils' achievement.
- The governing body provides a good level of challenge to the headteacher in order to secure the best for pupils.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils are known well as individuals and relationships are harmonious. Pupils listen well to each other and to adults. They have a good awareness of right and wrong, and of their own and other people's cultures and backgrounds.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Although pupils' progress rates compare favourably with the national average, not enough pupils exceed the national rates and not enough of them reach above-average standards in English and mathematics for their achievement to be graded outstanding.
- Attendance has improved, however it remains below average because there are still a few families whose children attend too infrequently.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, but there are no opportunities for pupils to broaden their horizons and deepen their cultural understanding through first-hand interaction with people from different backgrounds and cultures beyond the immediate locality.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed eight lessons of which two were joint observations with the headteacher. He made a number of other short visits to lessons. All teachers were observed at least once.
- The inspector spoke with pupils, parents and carers, and held meetings with representatives from the governing body and the local authority, as well as school staff.
- The inspector took account of the two responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection.
- The inspector observed the school's work and examined safeguarding documentation, attendance and behaviour records, information on pupils' attainment and progress, the curriculum, the school's self-evaluation, and the school's plans for further improvement.

Inspection team

Richard Marsden, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average primary school.
- Pupils are taught in four mixed-age and mixed-ability classes.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage, with very few from minority ethnic heritages. There are no pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and for whom the school receives additional income (the pupil premium) is almost double the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported by school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school has Healthy Schools status and holds the Basic Skills award.
- The current headteacher joined the school in January 2010.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that more pupils exceed the nationally expected rates of progress, whatever their starting points, and that a higher proportion of more-able pupils reach National Curriculum Levels 5 or 6 in English and mathematics. Do this by organising lessons in the school's mixed-age and mixed-ability classes in such a way as to maximise learning time for all pupils.
- Improve attendance rates by strengthening engagement with the small number of families whose children's attendance is too low.
- Strengthen pupils' cultural development by creating opportunities for them to have first-hand interaction with people from communities beyond the immediate locality.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- When pupils join the school in the Early Years Foundation Stage, their capability in English and mathematics is below national expectations. They make good and, in some cases, outstanding progress as they move up the school so that, by the time they leave, their attainment is broadly in line with that of pupils nationally.
- Parents and carers, and pupils themselves, say that pupils' progress is good. There are no significant variations in the achievement of boys and girls. Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals also achieve well. Extra funding through the pupil premium is well used to ensure that their learning needs are met.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve well because they receive strong support in lessons or in small-group or individual activities with an adult nearby. The very few pupils from minority ethnic heritages also make good progress.
- Standards of reading are average. The higher attaining pupils in Years 2 and 6 read fluently and with excellent expression, demonstrating skills above those expected for their age. Lower attaining pupils in these years also show a sound grasp of the principles of reading.
- Pupils talk enthusiastically about the kinds of books they enjoy reading and why. Younger pupils confidently showed the inspector how they have been taught to use 'sounding-out' techniques to tackle unfamiliar words.
- Progress was outstanding in a literacy lesson in which younger pupils were preparing to produce their own web page. The teacher's introductory remarks fired pupils with enthusiasm and they eagerly set about their own tasks on computers. All made excellent progress because the task motivated them highly and they understood clearly what they needed to do to succeed.
- In a few English and mathematics lessons, while the pace of learning was good, it was not sufficiently rapid to allow pupils to make exceptional progress.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers' planning takes careful account of what pupils already know, understand, and can do, in order to ensure that tasks provide a good level of challenge, engage all pupils and motivate them well. Tasks are carefully chosen to ensure that they motivate both boys and girls.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs receive high-quality support from teachers and teaching assistants, either within lessons or in one-to-one or small group activities nearby. Their needs are identified early and their progress is meticulously tracked.
- Teachers' explanations are clear, and teachers question pupils skilfully to check understanding. They reshape tasks and explanations to ensure that all pupils in the school's mixed-age and mixed-ability classes learn at a good pace.
- Activities in lessons are lively and varied. Teachers use computer technology, visual aids, games and competitions, group and pair activities, and many 'hands-on' tasks, so that pupils do not have to sit and listen passively for long periods of time.
- Where teaching is at its best, pupils of different ages and abilities move swiftly and efficiently from one well-organised activity to the next with no time lost. Progress is very rapid in these

lessons.

- In a few lessons, rather too much time is given over to organising pupils and equipment, as opposed to actual learning, so that, in these lessons, pupils do not make such rapid progress.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is strong and, in all classes, they convey high expectations of what pupils should achieve. They expect pupils routinely to use technical language such as 'melodrama', 'personification' and 'vertices', for example.
- The school's methods for teaching reading and writing are used consistently by all teachers and have been successful in raising standards. Teachers promote English, mathematics and computer skills very effectively across different subjects. Homework is used well to reinforce what is done in class.
- Teachers' marking of pupils' work is a particular strength. Teachers provide high-quality feedback, showing pupils clearly how well they are doing against their personal targets and how to improve. Pupils say they these comments are very useful in helping them to make progress.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage games and role play enhance learning, both indoors and out. Staff interact constantly with children, taking every opportunity to develop children's language and observational skills. Assessment is detailed and accurate.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Positive attitudes to learning and good behaviour are the norm, enabling teachers to teach effectively and pupils to learn rapidly. Parents and carers express satisfaction with the way the school manages any unacceptable behaviour from individual pupils and ensures that it does not disrupt the education of others.
- Pupils and their parents and carers say pupils feel safe in school. Pupils show a good awareness of different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying. They have confidence in the school's response to any such instances if they should arise.
- Relationships between adults and pupils show high levels of mutual respect. Pupils are proud to serve their school by taking on jobs and responsibilities, such as librarians and assembly monitors. They serve the wider community in a variety of ways, not least by raising money for charities.
- The school's system for sanctions and rewards is well understood by pupils and is applied consistently by all staff, ensuring good behaviour management. Clear routines and high expectations are communicated from the start of the Early Years Foundation Stage, and children respond well to these from the outset.
- The absenteeism of a few pupils means that attendance rates are below average. There are procedures aimed at improving attendance but so far these have not been successful in all families.
- The school gives good support to pupils whose circumstances have made them vulnerable. The school's support has enabled such pupils to maintain high standards of attendance, behaviour and work, and make good progress in line with that of their peers.
- Pupils listen and cooperate well when working together in groups. They give thoughtful responses when given the opportunity for reflection, for example in assembly. They show an understanding of multi-cultural society but do not have opportunities to interact at first hand

with people from communities beyond the immediate locality.

The leadership and management are good

- Ambitious leadership and high expectations by the headteacher are reflected throughout the school. School development plans are realistic, sharply focused and illustrate well the school's ambition to seek ongoing improvement.
- Strong management of the performance of teaching have brought about improvements. Teaching is rigorously and regularly monitored, and professional dialogues between staff enable teachers to share ideas, reflect on their own performance and seek ways in which they can improve provision for the benefit of pupils.
- Staff training has strengthened the way teachers assess pupils and use assessment information to promote pupils' learning. It has led to a sharper focus on the role of success criteria in lesson planning and how these can accelerate pupils' progress.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. Topics are carefully chosen to appeal to both boys and girls. Themed weeks, such as Science Week ('Fizz, Bubble Pop!') and South America week, provide memorable experiences and bring learning to life for pupils.
- Extra-curricular activities are varied. They include music and sport, visits of many kinds and a residential trip for older pupils during which they enjoy adventurous and confidence-building outdoor activities.
- Equal opportunities are rigorously pursued. No pupil, regardless of background or need, is denied access to anything the school has to offer. Leaders ensure that there is no discrimination of any kind for any groups of pupils.
- Accurate and well-focused self-evaluation enables the school to keep all aspects of its work under constant review. With the support of the local authority, staff have improved this aspect of their work.
- The local authority's support has ensured that teachers have a secure understanding of National Curriculum levels and are confident that their grading of pupils' work is in line with that of other schools.
- Child protection and safeguarding have a high priority. Leaders ensure that these areas are kept under meticulous review to ensure that legal requirements are met and that good practice prevails.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - is well organised and well informed, so that governors have a good understanding of the school and its context
 - ensures that the headteacher is held to account
 - benefits from the support of the local authority, with governors having received training, for example, in how to use self-evaluation to promote improvement
 - involves regular formal and informal visits to the school by governors to review aspects of the school's work as they seek to drive further improvement.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	112628
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	401288

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	99
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Donna Longden
Headteacher	Lisa Duncan
Date of previous school inspection	19 October 2009
Telephone number	01246 472540
Fax number	01246 472540
Email address	info@poolsbrook.derbyshire.sch.uk

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