

# Howard Community Primary School

St Olave's Road, , Bury St Edmunds, IP32 6RW

## Inspection dates

18–19 October 2012

|                                |                      |                             |          |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|----------|
| <b>Overall effectiveness</b>   | Previous inspection: | Satisfactory                | 3        |
|                                | This inspection:     | <b>Requires improvement</b> | <b>3</b> |
| Achievement of pupils          |                      | Requires improvement        | 3        |
| Quality of teaching            |                      | Requires improvement        | 3        |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils |                      | Good                        | 2        |
| Leadership and management      |                      | Requires improvement        | 3        |

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Attainment in writing is not as strong as in reading and mathematics. In the past, writing has not always fired pupils' enthusiasm and they have not had enough chances to write in different subjects.
- Teaching requires improvement because the work for more able pupils is not always hard enough and pupils do not consistently respond to teachers' comments in their books.
- While building her team around her, the headteacher has not shared enough of her responsibilities with other leaders, especially in checking the work of the school.
- Leaders have not always written up their findings about how the school is doing in ways that are clear to teachers.
- They have not followed-up areas to improve in teaching quickly enough.
- Governors do not know enough about how targets are set for teachers, or how well they are meeting them, so that they can ask searching questions of leaders.
- The outdoor space of the Early Years Foundation Space is not used well enough to boost learning.

### The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher has a clear vision for improving the school and has built up a united team of staff.
- Teaching has improved this term so that the majority of it is now good.
- Pupils behave well in class and around the school and have a good understanding about how to keep safe.
- Reading is taught well and standards in reading are above average.
- Children get off to a good start in the Nursery and Reception and learn a lot inside their classrooms.
- Almost all pupils had made one National Curriculum level progress from the end of Year 2 by the time they left the school at the end of Year 4 in 2012.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language receive good support and achieve well.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 16 lessons or parts of lessons, some of which were joint observations with the headteacher. All teachers and support staff were seen working with the pupils.
- Inspectors heard pupils read from Years 1, 2, 3 and 4, attended an assembly, and undertook a scrutiny of pupils' work with the headteacher.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of school documents, including development plans, policies, self-evaluation reports, monitoring files, safeguarding and curriculum materials, local authority reports on the school, evidence of the school's partnership work and information for families.
- Meetings were held with pupils chosen at random. Discussions were held with the headteacher and senior leaders, class teachers, the Chair of the Governing Body and other governors, and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the eight responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), and spoke individually with several parents and carers during the course of the inspection and examined the results of the school's own questionnaire to parents from June 2012.

## Inspection team

Nick Butt, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Matthew Klimcke

Additional Inspector

# Full report

## Information about this school

- This is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average.
- An above-average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- As the pupils leave the school at the end of Year 4 to go to middle school, government floor standards for Year 6 pupils do not apply.
- There have been several changes of staff this term, with four teachers joining the school.

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

- Make teaching consistently good or better by:
  - ensuring that more able pupils, in particular, are given sufficiently demanding work to do
  - giving pupils enough time to respond to marking in their books and to act on the comments
  - developing the outside space of the Early Years Foundation Stage as a rich environment for all areas of learning.
- Raise attainment in writing by:
  - building on work to make writing for pupils exciting and with a clear purpose
  - extending the opportunities for pupils to use and apply their writing skills across different subjects
  - raising the profile of writing throughout the school in displays and events.
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
  - sharing responsibilities among senior leaders more widely
  - recording the impact of monitoring and promptly checking that teachers have acted on the advice given by leaders about their lessons
  - governors asking searching questions about the impact of the school's performance management arrangements.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Across the school, attainment in writing is often below expectations and weaker than in reading and mathematics. Pupils have not found the subject interesting enough and have not always seen the point in what they were expected to write.
- Teachers have made efforts to give pupils a clear purpose for their writing and to make it more stimulating and enjoyable. Pupils now have writing journals to record their ideas and are beginning to practise their skills in other subjects. For example, Year 3 pupils wrote about making collages out of natural materials.
- While an increasing proportion of pupils are making good progress, this is inconsistent. Staff absence had led to pupils not doing their best in the past, and some of them are still catching up on gaps in their knowledge and understanding.
- Children join the school with skills and abilities well below those usually found, especially in language and communication, and social development. They make good progress in the Nursery and Reception because there is plenty for them to do indoors that they enjoy and staff understand how they learn best.
- In Reception, children loved burying their hands in shaving foam, which they described as 'soft and squidgy' and went on to practise writing their letters in the foam.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve well because they receive good support that is tailored to their needs. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make expected progress and do best when they receive individual attention.
- Those pupils known to be eligible for additional funding through the pupil premium make similar progress to their classmates and gaps in their attainment are closing. This is because the money is spent in ways to boost their learning, such as one-to-one tuition and additional support staff.
- Reading is taught well. Younger pupils use a variety of ways to read new words and older pupils develop the skills they need to understand text and read widely. Standards in reading are generally above those expected while those in mathematics are mainly in line.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement, although there is better teaching this term boosted by the appointment of new staff.
- Teachers do not plan work for more able pupils that is sufficiently difficult. These pupils often have to sit through explanations they already understand, and not enough demands are made of them. This means that they do not reach the standards they could.
- While marking is regular, and teachers give pupils advice about how to improve their work, pupils are not given enough time to respond to the comments or make the changes necessary.
- The teaching of writing is more effective than it was, and pupils are finding it more interesting.

However, writing is sometimes too controlled, and pupils do not have enough opportunity to share their ideas with one another. Pupils' writing is not celebrated enough in displays around the school, or given a higher profile through special events.

- The sounds that letters make are taught well in the Nursery and Reception, so that children gain a good early understanding of text. This learning is reinforced by the rich use of language around the classroom, such as in labels in the role-play vet surgery. Children in Reception have a writing 'castle' that they requested and that inspires them.
- The good practice that gives children lots of exciting activities to promote their learning in the classrooms of the Early Years Foundation Stage is not so apparent in the outside area, where there is less for children to do. The school has identified this as something that needs improving.
- Teachers question pupils well to probe their understanding and to extend their thinking. For example, Year 4 pupils were coming up with problems and solutions based on their reading of *James and the Giant Peach* by Roald Dahl. The teacher's careful questioning helped pupils to think through their responses and to identify which solutions would work.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language are helped to play a full part in lessons with pictures and the words they need, and are encouraged to speak up by support staff. As a result, they make good progress in their learning.
- Additional support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, and for those supported by pupil premium funding, mean that they keep up with their classmates and some of them do even better. Adults who work individually with particular pupils do a good job of keeping them interested in lessons and helping them to do their best.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- Pupils say that behaviour is typically good. They say that pupils care for one another. They think adults are fair in the way that they treat them, and they enjoy receiving rewards for their good behaviour.
- Most parents agree that behaviour is good. They say that their children enjoy school and think they are kept safe.
- Pupils are enthusiastic about learning, especially when they are busy and the work is making them think. They work well together as partners or in groups, and show respect to their classmates and to adults.
- The school succeeds with pupils who find it difficult sometimes to behave well. The caring approach of staff, which values all pupils as individuals, means that pupils trust them and want to do their best for them. The school can point to particular pupils who have made great strides in improving their behaviour as a result of the support they have received.
- Pupils know all about the different forms of bullying, but are clear that they hardly ever see any of it going on in school. They know how to stand up to bullies and how to avoid getting themselves into trouble. They have a good understanding about cyber-bullying and e-safety.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school. The 'junior road-safety officers' take their jobs very seriously to make sure pupils are safe coming and going from school. Pupils also have a good knowledge

of dealing with potentially dangerous situations and how to keep safe around water, fire and railways.

- Attendance has risen rapidly over the past two years and is now average. The number of pupils who miss a lot of school has fallen considerably. Pupils enjoy being rewarded for their good attendance, and always want to win the class star.

### **The leadership and management**

### **requires improvement**

- The headteacher has shouldered many of the responsibilities of leadership while she has been building up the team around her. She has been doing too much and governors recognise that other leaders need to take on more of the load, especially in checking on the work of the school.
- While leaders are seeing how well things are going, they do not always record this in enough detail to show the full impact of improvements, or to follow-up promptly what could be done better.
- The deputy headteacher has taken a lead role in analysing data and the school has an accurate view of how well pupils are doing and where things could improve even more. Meetings to discuss the progress of particular pupils hold teachers to account for everybody's performance and make sure that no pupil is falling through the net.
- Leaders have been successful in improving the quality of teaching through working with particular teachers and by making some good new appointments this term. They set targets for teachers each year, but do not formally check how well teachers are meeting them at regular intervals during the year.
- The local authority has provided much effective support to the school, including advice on staffing issues, help with the Early Years Foundation Stage and improving links with the middle school. Pupils benefit from specialist art teaching provided by the middle school.
- Subjects are taught through whole-school themes such as 'Amazing People' and teachers take pupils' views and interests into account when planning topics. They organise plenty of visits to places of interest, and arrange for a wealth of visitors to give pupils new experiences. For example, Year 3 pupils are taking part in an excellent dance project being organised by tutors from the Royal Ballet School.
- There are many opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of spiritual, moral, social and cultural matters through the school's caring values and celebration of diversity. Pupils are raising money for people who lack fresh running water and have taken civic pride in winning a silver award from 'Bury in Bloom' for their gardening achievements.
- The school is promoting equality of opportunity well through the support it provides for different groups of pupils. It makes sure that discrimination is not tolerated at all.
- The school fosters good relations with parents and other agencies. There are lots of parent volunteers and parents are very generous in fundraising for the school.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors are very committed to the school and have a good knowledge of its strengths and what needs to be improved further.

- While governors ask searching questions about some aspects of the school's work, they do not know enough about performance management arrangements to be sure that the school is getting value for money from all its staff or how it links pay to pupils' achievement and teachers' performance.
- Governors make sure that additional funding through the pupil premium is spent appropriately on supporting disadvantaged pupils through, for example, one-to-one tuition and extra support staff.

## 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

|                                |         |
|--------------------------------|---------|
| <b>Unique reference number</b> | 124555  |
| <b>Local authority</b>         | Suffolk |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 402270  |

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

|  |                                 |
|--|---------------------------------|
| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Primary                         |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Community I                     |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 3–9                             |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed                           |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 184                             |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body              |
| <b>Chair</b>                               | Marie Bennett                   |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Bernadette Higgins              |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>  | 9 February 2010                 |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                    | 01284 754450                    |
| <b>Fax number</b>                          | 01284 705041                    |
| <b>Email address</b>                       | admin@howard-pri.suffolk.sch.uk |

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit [www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk), or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store St  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2012



