

Pot Kiln Primary School

Butt Road, Great Cornard, Sudbury, CO10 0DS

Inspection dates

21–22 November 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
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

- Standards reached by pupils are lower than the national average at the end of Key Stage 1.
- Teachers' expectations of pupils are not always high enough, especially for the most-able pupils.
- Standards attained by pupils in Key Stage 2 are not high enough.
- Governors do not check the school's progress towards challenging targets as well as they should. They are too dependent on senior staff providing them with information about how well the school is doing.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils' behaviour is good. They pay attention and make valuable and intelligent contributions in class. Even in the younger classes pupils quickly develop skills of independent learning.
- From a low starting point, children in Nursery and Reception classes make good progress.
- The school now has reliable and accurate ways to judge how well pupils are doing. Teachers use this information well in most classes.
- The support given to pupils, including those with special educational needs, who need help with reading, writing or mathematics, is very effective in improving their standards of attainment. Teachers are very skilled at understanding pupils' needs and providing for them.

Information about this inspection

- When Pot Kiln Primary School was inspected in October 2011, it was judged to require special measures. Subsequently, the school was visited by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors on three occasions.
- Inspectors had meetings with staff, a representative from the governing body and the local authority, and groups of pupils. A number of parents gave their informal views about the quality of their children's education to inspectors at the school gates. There were insufficient responses from parents and carers to the online questionnaire (Parent View) for inspectors to make use of this.
- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all 11 of the school's classes. Particular attention was paid to the standards at which pupils were working and to written work. In addition, the school's information on progress was evaluated, as well as records of teaching observations, governing body minutes, improvement plans, and documentation relevant to safeguarding. Short visits were made to classes to evaluate specific themes, for example behaviour and progress.
- Inspectors listened to several pupils read.
- Two joint lesson observations were carried out with the headteacher and deputy headteacher.

Inspection team

Ian Seath, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Alan Jarvis

Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

Information about this school

- The school is close to average size.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The school is subject to the local reorganisation of schools from a two-tier to a three-tier system. As a consequence, it does not have a full Key Stage 2 cohort. There are no pupils in Year 6. The present Year 5 will remain at the school to form the first Year 6 in September 2013.
- An above-average proportion of pupils are eligible for the pupil premium. This provides extra money to support the education of 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 at school action is well above average. The proportion supported by school action plus or who have a statement of Special educational needs is average.
- Since the last inspection about a half of teachers have left and been replaced. Significant changes have also occurred to the governing body, notably the appointment of a new and very experienced Chair of the Governing Body and local authority representatives.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By September 2013, ensure that teaching and learning are at least good in the great majority of classes across all year groups and in all subjects by:
 - making sure that all teachers' lessons are planned and taught so that all children do as well as they can in all classes and the more able are given more challenging work
 - identifying those teachers who do this well and sharing their best practice.
- By July 2014, raise the standards attained by all pupils so that they are consistently above the national average by:
 - improving progress made in reading, especially at Key Stage 1, by giving more opportunities for pupils to read aloud and to read more regularly
 - ensuring that the most-able pupils are stretched in class and through a gifted and talented programme.
- With immediate effect, use the expertise recently recruited to the governing body to make sure that governors:
 - arrange for challenging performance management and improvement targets for pupils' attainment and the quality of teaching to be set for all staff, including for school leaders
 - systematically monitor progress towards them
 - set and monitor targets for the successful use of the pupil premium.
 - ensure that their understanding of how the school works and performs becomes less dependent on information provided by leaders, for example by using published performance data or by talking with teachers directly.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement is not good because standards are close to national average in Key Stage 2 but below in Key Stage 1.
- Most pupils start at the school with skills and aptitudes below, and sometimes well below, those expected for their age. They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, especially in the Nursery class. By the time they start Year 1, standards of attainment are broadly average, although children's reading and writing skills remain lower than other areas of learning.
- Children are becoming better writers. The greater emphasis given to encourage more children to speak in class, including using their knowledge of letters and sounds, and encouraging parents to help with writing at home, are having a good impact.
- In Key Stage 1 classes, inspectors observed pupils making better than expected progress in writing and mathematics. Pupils' progress in mathematics is strong in Years 1 and 2 because of the effective support given by staff to those who need extra help. In reading, however, pupils make below the expected progress.
- Despite improvements in progress, the standards of attainment reached in Key Stage 1 remain below the national average.
- The progress made by pupils supported by the pupil premium, including pupils known to be eligible for free schools meals, as well as the progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, has improved. This is especially the case in reading, writing and mathematics in Years 3 and 4, where pupils' progress has accelerated. Their achievement is similar to other pupils in the school.
- Gaps between the attainment of boys and girls are small. The most-able pupils make less progress than other pupils in some year groups because teachers do not challenge them sufficiently well.
- The school has no national assessment results for Key Stage 2 because it does not have pupils in Year 6. The school's own monitoring and observations of learning in class show that progress continues to improve. By Year 5, pupils have reached standards of attainment that are comparable with those expected nationally and a little better than this for mathematics. Overall, an increasing proportion of pupils are making expected levels of progress.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Since the last inspection, the school has improved the ways that it measures how well pupils are doing. It gives an accurate picture of how individual pupils are progressing.
- The main reason that teaching is not good is that this information is not always used well in class. This means that what is taught is sometimes too easy for some pupils and too hard for others. Not enough attention is paid to providing high-quality challenges to the most-able pupils. Where this happens, the most-able pupils often complete tasks early and are left with nothing to do.

- The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. This is the key reason why pupils are now making better progress.
- Children in the Nursery and Reception classes benefit from a stimulating learning environment and good lessons that meet their individual learning needs. A good balance of well-chosen activities, indoors and outside, encourages them to learn by themselves. Teachers give clear explanations so that children are crystal clear about what they have to learn. Other adults support learning well but they sometimes miss opportunities to teach the sounds that letters make.
- Class sizes are small as a result of the money spent from pupil premium funding. This has ensured that the teachers are more able to focus on the needs of individual pupils and, consequently, their progress is improving.
- Teachers' marking of written work is good, almost always helpful and encouraging without being too critical. The setting of homework, including reading, is regular. Pupils know how to improve their work.
- All staff have had training in teaching reading by matching sounds with letters (phonics). As a result, this is mostly taught well. Throughout the school, a renewed emphasis on pupils reading with adults is beginning to improve pupils' progress.
- The school has recently placed much emphasis on the development of pupils' skills of problem-solving and learning by themselves. Since the last monitoring visit this has led to a remarkable improvement in pupils' attitude to learning in class. Silly behaviour is now unusual. Pupils are interested in what they are doing. They are attentive and keen to learn. Most learn well when asked to read silently or work by themselves or with others.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Behaviour around the school and in lessons has improved since the last inspection. This is because the school's policies have been strengthened and staff manage pupils' behaviour more consistently. Pupils say that teachers have become stricter and the school rules are fairly applied. Exclusions remain low but have also seen a marked reduction in the current school year.
- Instances of bullying and serious disruption are rare. Much has been done to raise awareness of what constitutes bullying and the steps pupils need to take if it occurs. The girls, in particular, confirm that unkind behaviour is rare and if it is reported it is dealt with immediately.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and do their best to attend on a regular basis. Any absence is followed up and holidays in term time are not authorised. Consequently, attendance has improved and persistent absence is reduced. Both are now close to average.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to avoid dangerous situations and keep safe. They feel very secure in school and appreciate the support they are given if they have a mishap in the playground or are upset. They feel very confident in letting a teacher know if any circumstances out of school is worrying them and affecting their schoolwork.
- The pupils are kind to pupils who join the school partway through the school year. For example, one girl said that, 'When a Polish girl joined I was her buddy and I helped her make new friends'. Disabled pupils and pupils who have special educational needs are fully included in everything the school offers.

- The school has put a lot of effort into developing pupils' learning skills in class. As a result, they apply themselves well, pay attention and are keen to learn.
- The main reason why pupils' behaviour and safety is not outstanding is that the behaviour of a few pupils in class or on the playground is sometimes not as good as it should be and there are not enough opportunities for more pupils to take on responsibilities around the school.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Around half of staff and governors are new in post. This new team is keen to improve the progress all pupils are making. The headteacher and deputy have provided effective leadership and staff morale is high.
- This is because the headteacher and her deputy have strengthened their checking of how well teachers are helping pupils to learn and make progress so they are more effective in helping them to improve. The school's planning and checking of how well it is doing is much better than at the last inspection when it went into special measures. It has set itself challenging targets, and has met them.
- The school's curriculum has improved and is no longer inadequate. It has a better focus on skills that are needed to help pupils be successful in particular subject areas. The stronger emphasis given to letters and sounds and writing is helping to raise standards of attainment. Pupils enjoy French and German lessons and music which helps them play instruments and practice singing skills.
- The use of literacy and numeracy in subjects other than English and mathematics is developing well. Pupils enjoy the outside visits that have been introduced which broaden their experiences. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education has been strengthened. Pupils' horizons have been widened by the strong links that have been established with schools in four other countries. They have learnt a lot about their cultures, the food they eat and the sports they play.
- The school is spending the pupil premium on keeping class sizes small and providing additional support for mathematics in Year 2. This is to ensure that these pupils can receive more individual, targeted support and has helped to improve eligible pupils' progress.
- Performance management of staff has been strengthened and is now effective in raising standards. Progression by staff through the teacher's pay spine is now dependent on meeting progress targets and the quality of teaching. Many new staff and governors have joined the school since the last inspection, bringing with them useful skills and experience.
- The support and expertise provided by the local authority was extensive when the school was first placed in special measures. It has now reduced significantly as the school develops the capacity to maintain improvement.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governors' view of how the school is performing comes mainly from the good quality analyses and data that the headteacher and deputy headteacher provide. They are too dependent on this and, as a consequence, have not been able to set their own challenging targets. They are not sufficiently involved in monitoring performance. They do not challenge the headteacher and deputy headteacher enough. Although the school manages the pupil premium well, governors have been too dependent on senior managers in their oversight of this. Most governors, however, have undertaken appropriate training to carry out their role.

They have successfully ensured that the school meets requirements for safeguarding and child protection. The local authority has very recently provided a new Chair of the Governing Body. She is an experienced governor with expertise in school improvement. In addition, the governing body has two representatives from the local authority. These changes have had a positive effect on the extent to which governors are driving school 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	124536
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	399172

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills (HMCI) the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	227
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lesley Ford-Platt
Headteacher	Wilma Hyde
Date of previous school inspection	11 October 2011
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