

# Poplars Community Primary School

St Margaret's Road, Lowestoft, NR32 4HN

**Inspection dates** 19–20 June 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	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

- Levels of attainment across the school are not higher than national standards. Last year attainment was low in mathematics at both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.
- In the last two years progress has been slower but now pupils make the progress expected nationally in both writing and mathematics.
- Actions taken by new leadership teams such as middle leaders and the governing body, have not had enough impact on pupils' progress.
- Subject leaders are not yet effective enough in monitoring their areas of responsibility.
- Some teaching is good but it varies too much across the school. Too many lessons require improvement in order to be good.
- Teaching does not consistently match work to the wide range of pupils' abilities.
- Marking is not used effectively enough to help pupils make good progress.

### The school has the following strengths

- Progress in reading is good because staff are trained well and teach reading well.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher know the school well and their actions are starting to bring about improvements.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
- Systems for assessing pupils' learning have improved and now provide more accurate information so leaders can plan improvements.
- Pupils are courteous and polite around the school and in lessons.
- The school cares well for all of its pupils and keeps them safe, including those who have challenging behaviour or emotional needs.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 23 lessons, two of which were joint lesson observations with senior leaders.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' work and listened to a sample of pupils from Years 1, 2 and 6 read.
- Meetings were held with pupils, a representative from the local authority and school staff, including senior leaders and subject leaders. A meeting was also held with two members of the Governing Body, including the Chair.
- School documents were examined, including those relating to safeguarding arrangements, information on pupils' achievement, headteacher reports and school improvement planning.
- Inspectors took account of the views of parents through a questionnaire carried out by the school. The views of staff were looked at through 42 staff questionnaires.

## Inspection team

Peter Lacey-Hastings, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Gay Tattersall	Additional Inspector
John Mason	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Poplars Community Primary School is larger than the average primary school. It has recently undergone a change to become an all-through primary school and now has its second group of Year 6 pupils.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage provision includes a Nursery that caters for three to four year-olds each morning and afternoon.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is well above average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also well above average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is above average. This is additional funding to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those in local authority care and those from families in the armed services.
- The very large majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- A very few pupils receive some of their education through other settings. They attend The Harbour referral unit and First Base referral unit for two days each week.

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

- Increase the proportion of teaching which is good or better, especially of mathematics, by:
  - using marking so comments are directed more at pupils to help them improve their work
  - giving pupils more opportunity to respond to teachers' comments in books
  - matching work more closely to the range of abilities in classrooms so the learning needs of all pupils are met.
- Increase the effectiveness of leadership and governance by:
  - increasing the effectiveness of middle leaders so they monitor their areas of responsibility through lesson observations, work scrutiny and analysing information on pupils' achievement
  - ensuring that leaders use better teachers within the school to share effective teaching strategies
  - members of the governing body taking a more active role in challenging the school to show how successful improvement plans are.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Children join the school with skills levels that are below those expected for their age. This is especially so in their communication and language skills and in their personal, social and emotional development. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make expected progress but their progress is quicker in speaking and listening and in their personal, social and emotional development.
- Attainment at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage varies from year to year. Last year pupils at the end of their Reception year attained higher than other children nationally. In other years their attainment is below other children nationally.
- In last year's reading check, Year 1 pupils were below the national average. This year there has been a great improvement and pupils' progress in reading is becoming quicker. However, national scores for this year have not yet been published and so comparisons cannot be made.
- In 2012 pupils' attainment at Key Stage 1 was low in reading and in mathematics. In writing their attainment was in line with the national average. These pupils started Key Stage 1 below average for the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage. As a result, they made nationally expected progress from lower starting points.
- Pupils at Key Stage 1 make expected progress. They make better progress in reading than they do in writing or mathematics. This is because teaching in reading at Key Stage 1 is bringing about a quicker increase in rates of progress than for other subjects.
- From the beginning of Key Stage 2 pupils make nationally expected progress. There is some variation in their progress across different year groups and across different subjects.
- Progress in reading at Key Stage 2 is good, but in writing and mathematics it is at expected rates. In the last year progress at Key Stage 2 across year groups and subjects has been slightly quicker than in the previous years. This is because the quality of teaching has started to improve.
- In reading, pupils have books that are at the right level for their abilities. They are able to apply their knowledge of how letters link with sounds (phonics) in order to read unfamiliar words. Older pupils say they enjoy reading more than writing or mathematics. They are able to say which authors they like, such as Tolkien and J.K Rowling, and why they choose certain kinds of books.
- Pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium generally achieve better than other pupils. Their attainment last year was slightly lower than other pupils at Key Stage 1, especially in writing. At Key Stage 2 their attainment last year was similar to that of other pupils and there were no gaps.
- Pupils eligible for the pupil premium make better progress than other pupils in the school. They make better progress in mathematics than they do in English. This is because planned interventions and individual support programmes have been more effective for these pupils in mathematics.

- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, including those who attend other settings, make similar progress to other pupils. Pupils with a statement make better progress than other pupils. This is because the school knows these pupils well and uses accurate assessments to plan work that meets their individual needs.

### **The quality of teaching**

### **requires improvement**

- Teaching varies too much across different year groups and across different subjects. Although some teaching is good and an outstanding lesson was also observed, too much teaching requires improvement. The majority of lessons observed during the inspection required improvement.
- Work is not always matched closely enough to the range of abilities in each class. As a result, pupils sometimes do work that is either too hard for them or too easy. This limits their learning and means they do not make good progress.
- Other adults are used well in lessons. They are active in helping pupils make progress through effective questioning. They are also used to help make assessments of how well pupils are learning. This is improving the accuracy of information that teachers have on pupils' progress.
- In better lessons work is matched carefully to the different abilities of all pupils. This helps pupils to make progress from their different starting points.
- Teachers give pupils verbal feedback as to how well they are doing, but this does not always extend their thinking and is sometimes too general. This means that questions are not focused enough on different ability groups. This means that not all pupils make good progress or do work that they are capable of.
- Work is marked regularly. However, comments are not directed at pupils enough and this means they are not always clear about how to improve their work. Pupils do not receive enough opportunity to respond to marking.
- Relationships between adults and pupils are good and this helps pupils to have a positive attitude to learning. Pupils are keen to learn and in better lessons they are shown how learning can be applied to real-life situations. For example, in a mathematics lesson, pupils used their knowledge of perimeters to plan different ways to make fencing on a farm.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage requires improvement overall because children are making expected progress. Teaching is better in personal, social and emotional development and in speaking and listening. This is because children have better opportunities to learn and apply skills in these areas of learning.

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

### **are good**

- Pupils are courteous, polite and friendly around the school. They engage with visitors and are keen to help adults and each other.
- Pupils say that bullying is rare and that when incidents occur adults deal with them well. Some pupils who have come from other schools say that they have experienced bullying in their previous school. They say that they feel safer and happier at Poplars.

- Pupils have a good awareness of different kinds of bullying, including racism and homophobic language. They are aware of the dangers of using the internet and know how to keep themselves safe when using it. They know that discrimination of any kind is not tolerated.
- Pupils who have behavioural and emotional difficulties are well managed. They say they feel safe and are helped to improve their behaviour or how they feel about themselves.
- Safety rules are well observed by pupils and they understand the reasons for them. For example, they are not allowed to play games on the wet grass because they might slip.
- Pupils are given roles of responsibility such as 'playground buddies'. These pupils enjoy their role and other pupils also like the way they are helped and supported by them. For example, the 'playground buddies' learn games that they can share with others.
- Attendance is below the national average. The school works hard with parents and with other agencies in order to improve attendance.

### **The leadership and management**

### **requires improvement**

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher know accurately what the school needs to do to improve. They monitor and support the work of teachers, although this is not yet bringing about faster rates of progress across all subjects.
  - Performance targets for teachers link to pupil progress, the national 'Teachers' Standards' and to pay progression. Teachers that need to improve their effectiveness are given an action plan which includes both monitoring and training opportunities. This is helping to improve teaching, especially in reading.
  - The role of middle leaders is not established enough for them to have an impact in their areas of leadership. They are not used to monitoring their areas of responsibility. This includes carrying out lesson observations, work scrutiny and analysing information on pupils' achievement.
  - Leaders at all levels have managed the school well with regard to important changes, such as the school becoming a primary school. This has included an increase in the number of pupils and new building works to accommodate them.
  - The partnership with the local authority has helped the school, including providing training, support and finances. For example, Year 6 teachers have had training on teaching older pupils and senior leaders have received support on school improvement.
  - The way subjects are taught is helping pupils to make progress, especially in reading. Themes are used to help pupils make link across different subjects. For example, there have been topics such as Pirates, Zoos and writing activities that review famous works of art
  - The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. For example, there is an art club which helps pupils to develop their imagination and creativity. There has also been a topic called 'The Chocolate Project' which gave pupils the chance to consider moral questions. Through these and a variety of different approaches the school promotes equal
-

opportunities for all pupils.

- Safeguarding requirements are met, including checks undertaken on adults working with pupils.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body is beginning to improve its effectiveness such as establishing a school improvement committee that all members attend. It is also in a time of change, with a new Chair. Members of the governing body know the school well and rightly identify mathematics as an area for improvement and know that progress in reading is getting quicker. Members of the governing body know what the pupil premium is used for, such as interventions for small groups and individuals. However, they are not certain how much money they receive for the pupil premium or the impact of actions on pupils' progress for this group. Sometimes the governing body relies on school leaders to support them in their effectiveness. They do not always take the initiative in challenging school leaders such as monitoring the impact of school action plans.
-

## 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>	124639
<b>Local authority</b>	Suffolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	413473

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
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	522
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Robert Bruce
<b>Headteacher</b>	Lynsey Holzer
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	19 June 2008
<b>Telephone number</b>	01502 565757
<b>Fax number</b>	01502 531573
<b>Email address</b>	admin@poplars.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 2013

