

# Old Town First School and Nursery

Green Road, Poole, Dorset, BH15 1QB

**Inspection dates** 16–17 July 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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.

- Pupils make good and sometimes outstanding progress from low starting points overall. Standards are above average by the end of Year 2.
- Most teaching is good and some of it is outstanding. This consistently good picture is the key reason for pupils' good, and improving, progress.
- Pupils whose first language is not English make outstanding progress.
- The school's spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is particularly good and underpins all that the school does.
- Outstanding leadership from the headteacher and deputy headteacher, well supported by the governing body, has improved the school rapidly since last September. This is because they are knowledgeable about priorities for development and are not willing to accept second best.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They are eager and enthusiastic learners. They say they feel safe, a view that is supported by the vast majority of parents.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- In a few lessons, teaching is not always pitched at the right level so that pupils sometimes lose their concentration and progress in their learning slows.
- Work is marked well, but written feedback to pupils is not always clear enough about what they must do to improve their work and move on in their learning.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in all classes. They visited 12 lessons of which four were joint observations with the headteacher or the deputy headteacher. In addition, inspectors made many short visits to lessons, assemblies, the breakfast club and listened to pupils read.
- They held meetings with leaders and managers, staff and pupils, members of the governing body and two representatives from the local authority.
- Inspectors met informally with parents at the end of the school day and took account of the 45 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View).
- They observed the school's work and looked closely at a range of documentation, including the school's information about pupil progress, the school's checks on its own effectiveness, the development plan, moderation reports of pupils' standards and the quality of teaching, minutes of governing body meetings, records relating to behaviour, and safeguarding documents.
- Inspectors scrutinised samples of pupils' work and checked information on pupils' attendance.
- The inspectors analysed 29 questionnaires from staff.

## Inspection team

Gay Whent, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Laura Dickson

Additional Inspector

Dianne Jones

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is a larger-than-average-sized primary school.
- The school has had a significant period of change in leadership, with three headteachers since March 2012. The headteacher commenced her post in September 2012 and the new deputy in January 2013.
- The school is to be a nursery and infant school from September 2013, and is also increasing its intake of younger pupils. Year 2 and Year 3 pupils are transferring to local junior schools at the end of term.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a Nursery and in two Reception Year classes.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported at school action is below the national average. The proportion of those supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above the national average. These pupils have a variety of barriers to learning, which are mostly related to speech, language and communication needs.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium (extra government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children looked after by local authorities and children of service families) is below average. There are currently a small number of children who are looked after by local authorities and a small number of children of service families at the school.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is above average. The proportion of those pupils for whom English is an additional language is above average. At the time of the inspection, pupils with 29 different languages attended the school.
- There is a breakfast club on the school site. It is managed by the governing body and therefore formed part of the inspection.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching to outstanding by making sure that all teachers:
  - plan their lessons to be pitched more consistently to appropriate levels of challenge, closely matched to pupils' needs and abilities, so that pupils' attention and interest are maintained throughout their learning
  - understand the need for constructive feedback when marking so that all pupils are fully aware of their next steps in learning, giving them time to reflect on and respond to the teachers' comments.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

is good

- Achievement in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Children join the school either in the Nursery or the Reception class with knowledge and skills that are below, and in some cases well below, those expected for their age. They play and work together well and happily share their toys and equipment, both indoors and in the spacious area outside.
- The teaching of phonics (learning about the sounds that letters make) is now very well established and highly effective, as shown in the results of this year's phonic check. Pupils are now making more rapid progress in their reading. The school celebrates reading everywhere – in corridors, in small group rooms and to special effect in each classroom's stimulating reading area. Pupils in Year 2 happily share their love of books by a wide range of authors; some are passionate about history and science books. In one pupil's words, 'One day I want to be a palaeontologist and study plant eating dinosaurs like triceratops.'
- Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2 is above average. Most pupils are making good or better progress throughout the school. Whilst achievement is good it is not showing rapid and sustained progress over time for all cohorts of pupils which is why it is not yet outstanding.
- Most disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are making good or better progress in reading, writing and mathematics. This is as a result of the high quality training opportunities given to both teachers and their support staff, particularly in relation to raising awareness of effective strategies to narrow the gaps for pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable.
- The achievement of pupils who speak English as an additional language is outstanding. Although there are many different languages spoken, the superb support and resources they are given in individual and small group activities result in particularly good progress, often from very low starting points.
- All groups of pupils who benefit from the pupil premium are making good or better progress. Although they do not reach the same high levels of attainment as other pupils in the school in reading, writing and mathematics as measured by their average point scores at the end of Key Stage 1, the gaps in their attainment are narrowing significantly over time. Their needs are correctly identified and effective strategies are put into place to aid their learning.

### The quality of teaching

is good

- Teachers set high expectations, particularly of pupils' behaviour, which ensure a calm, purposeful working environment even on the hot days of the year.
- Pupils say they enjoy all their lessons, mathematics being a very popular choice for Year 2 pupils. Imaginative displays across the school show pupils enjoying practical mathematical activities across all year groups. In one, mathematics super heroes make invisibility potions for Harry Potter that include numbers that 'add up to 10ml' using ingredients such as 'toad skin oil' and 'witch's spit'. Reception children create 'money monsters' where an adult has written for the child that 'the circles are antennae that detect the money'.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work together effectively in teams in the classroom. They have extremely good relationships with pupils. Some teaching assistants have responsibility for small groups or for individual children. They ask good questions which pupils think carefully about before responding. Effective teaching strategies, appropriately targeted support and intervention ensure that most pupils' needs, whatever their ability, are met well.
- Teachers use assessment well to track, monitor and evaluate how successful pupils have been in their learning.
- The enthusiasm of teachers motivates pupils in their learning. Most lessons are well paced and lively. Well planned lessons ensure that most activities are set at the right level of difficulty for

all ability groups. However, a few lessons are not pitched consistently to appropriate levels of challenge, closely matched to pupils' needs and abilities. Consequently, work is occasionally too easy for some pupils or too hard for others, so that pupils' attention and interest wane a little.

- Where teaching is outstanding, pupils are fully engaged throughout the lesson and keen to succeed in their new learning. For instance, in a Year 3 lesson, pupils are learning to apply multiplication to solve a range of real-life problems. They are bursting to share their knowledge at every opportunity from 'spotting the fib' in the teacher's presentation of multiplication facts to their exit challenge which they all complete at their level of ability before they leave for playtime. A 'this is what you can do if you know how' attitude prevails.
- Teaching is not yet outstanding overall. Teachers mark pupils work conscientiously; however, not all teachers give constructive feedback. This means that pupils are not always aware of their next steps in learning or have time to reflect on, and respond to, their teachers' comments.

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

- Pupils behave well in lessons and are keen, enthusiastic learners. They agree the school is a safe place, as do the vast majority of their parents. Pupils particularly like their teachers.
- Behaviour is good throughout the school. Pupils move sensibly when moving around the school, in lessons, on the playground and in assembly. They politely hold doors open for visitors. At playtimes, pupils in Year 3 enjoy their role as monitors for the play equipment when they are responsible for putting it out and collecting it in.
- Behaviour is not yet outstanding owing to the few lessons where teachers do not pitch their work precisely to pupils' learning needs; some pupils lose their concentration and their attention waivers.
- Pupils are aware of what bullying means and say that it does not happen at this school. They know what to do in order to keep safe on the internet.
- A well-attended breakfast club makes a positive start to the day. Pupils enjoy a range of activities. They enthuse about their healthy eating menu which they have helped to create. They work and play together across all ages well.
- Attendance has been improving year on year and is a constant focus for the school. Data are monitored regularly and action is taken where needed. There have been very few exclusions in the school for the last three consecutive years.
- Fostering good relationships is an important focus for the school. One parent said that they 'cannot thank the school enough ...for the under riding support given for me and my child'.

### **The leadership and management are good**

- In the words of one member of staff, 'Although our headteacher has only been here a short while there is a feeling of everyone pulling together for the children, the school and the community. There have been lots of positive changes and a real sense of value that people listen to and consider suggested ideas, even if they cannot all be carried through.'
- There is a passionate drive for improvement that permeates all aspects of the school's work. The new headteacher lost no time in quickly establishing an effective team. The quality of teaching is good overall, which is why leadership and management are not yet outstanding. The school's evaluation of its own effectiveness is accurate, honest and focused on improving the quality of teaching. Teachers are given clear feedback on how they can improve their work, as well as acknowledgement of what they have done well.
- Leaders at all levels, including middle leaders, focus sharply on ensuring that all pupils fulfil their potential, that they have equal opportunities to prosper and that there is no discrimination.
- The school delights in its multicultural community and values this rich diversity. Photographs of families celebrating Holi are on display in the hall, while children's countries of origin are highlighted on a world map. Resources throughout the school celebrate all nations, including

signs in many languages. The school actively celebrates 'Our global family'. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted effectively through the school's rich curriculum inside and outside, during lessons and in the wide variety of clubs.

- The school meets the national requirements for safeguarding.
- The local authority has provided appropriate and timely support for the new headteacher to validate her judgements and provide an external view of the progress of the school.

■ **The governance of the school:**

– The governance of the school is now strong and governors are well organised and very well-informed. They know the school well and are ambitious in their support for the headteacher who they say has provided a 'steady hand at the helm'. They are finalising their new action plan for next term. Governors support the very clear drive for improvement by checking the effectiveness of school development planning and challenging it in order to clarify their understanding. They are well informed about the quality of teaching in the school and recognise the determined drive of the senior leaders to aim high. Governors attended staff training for setting up the tracking system prior to its implementation in the autumn term. Governors know how well the school is performing at the end of Key Stage 1 compared to all schools nationally using the current information available. They have a good knowledge of performance management systems and know that underperformance has been dealt with immediately. They are aware that pay is linked to performance; their new policy reflects this understanding. Governors keep a tight rein on the budget; in particular, they ensure that pupil premium funding is correctly directed at benefiting the learning of those pupils for which it is intended, as seen in the achievement of those pupils compared to their peers. Governors have taken full advantage of professional training opportunities to increase their effectiveness and are able to support and strengthen the school leadership with confidence.

## 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>	131694
<b>Local authority</b>	Poole
<b>Inspection number</b>	412224

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

<b>Type of school</b>	First
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–8
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	277
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Anne-Marie Clark and Caroline Fowler
<b>Headteacher</b>	Janine Harries
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	17 October 2007
<b>Telephone number</b>	01202 673966
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