

Aldeburgh Primary School

Park Road, Aldeburgh, IP15 5EU

Inspection dates

18 March 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires Improvement	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.

- Children in the Reception class settle quickly and make good progress.
- Most pupils make good progress as they move through the school.
- Leaders make good use of information about pupils' progress to quickly identify those who are falling behind and to make sure that they have effective extra help to catch up.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs receive similarly well-tailored support and do well.
- Behaviour is good because pupils are happy in school, enjoy working together and have positive relationships with the staff.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to school and a good understanding of how to be effective learners.
- Parents confirm that their children feel safe in school and are confident that the staff will look after them.
- Governors, headteacher and teachers have made good improvements in pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching since the previous inspection.
- The headteacher's dynamic leadership has done much to turn the school around. She has the confidence of all who are involved in the life of the school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Although pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 make good progress, too few reach higher levels of attainment in writing and mathematics because they have not yet overcome gaps in their earlier learning.
- Some pupils do not write neatly. Teachers do not follow the school's handwriting policy closely enough.
- Pupils are not routinely given time to read, understand and respond to suggestions teachers make about how to improve their work.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors sampled parts of six lessons. Two were jointly observed with the headteacher.
- The inspectors made other visits to classes, looked at pupils' workbooks and listened to pupils reading.
- Discussions were held with pupils, the headteacher, other staff, governors, a number of parents and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors took account of the 18 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and direct communications from parents. The responses to 17 staff questionnaires were also considered.
- The inspectors looked at a number of documents including: the school's own information on pupils' progress; planning and monitoring documentation; the school's view of its own performance; records of how the school uses its funding, especially how the money from the pupil premium is spent; records relating to behaviour and attendance; and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Robert Greatrex, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Lynn Lowery, Team inspector	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average primary school.
- The vast majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (the extra government funding for pupils looked after by the local authority and those known to be eligible for free school meals) is below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is well above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- Pupils are taught in four classes. Reception children are taught as one year group. Other year groups are taught in three mixed-age classes: Years 1 and 2, Years 3 and 4, and Years 5 and 6.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school has only admitted pupils in Years 5 and 6 since 2012, so pupils took national tests in Year 6 for the first time in 2013.
- An independent play school is based on the school site and is inspected separately.
- The headteacher took up the post in 2012 following a series of temporary appointments. There have also been changes to the teaching staff in recent years.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that:
 - teachers and other staff consistently follow the school's handwriting policy
 - pupils understand teachers' comments about how to improve their work, have time to reflect on them and staff check that their subsequent work demonstrates their understanding.
- Increase the proportion of pupils making rapid progress and reaching higher levels of attainment in Years 4, 5 and 6 by:
 - strengthening pupils' skills in spelling, punctuation, grammar and numeracy so that they overcome gaps in their earlier learning
 - ensuring pupils use these basic skills accurately in their work.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Children start in the Reception class with very varied skills and experiences which, overall, are a little below those typically seen at that age. They enjoy learning together and make good progress because tasks are interesting. In 2013, most children reached a good level of development by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Good progress continues throughout the school because the headteacher has instilled in staff and pupils alike a strong focus on academic achievement. Staff regularly check whether pupils are on track to do well. Pupils know what they have achieved, and what they need to focus on next. They are proud of their accomplishments, and want to do better.
- As a result, pupils' attainment is improving. In 2013, pupils in Year 2 reached average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Work in the pupils' books and the school's data shows that this year, all Year 2 pupils should achieve the expected level in reading, writing and mathematics, and about half are on course to exceed it.
- Reading standards have benefited from more systematic teaching, particularly of phonics (the sounds that letters make). In the 2013 Year 1 phonics screening check, all pupils met or exceeded the level expected which was an improvement on the previous year.
- Pupils falling behind in English and mathematics are given extra help tailored to their needs so that they can catch up, and pupils say that they learn particularly quickly with the boost of individual tuition.
- In Year 6, the school's test results in 2013 were average in reading and writing but below average in mathematics. This year at the end of Year 6, work in the pupils' books indicates that they are on course to reach the levels expected by the end of primary school.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress overall because their needs are accurately analysed and the right support is provided, often by skilled teaching assistants.
- The school has rightly recognised that the progress of more-able pupils should be quicker and, therefore, took action and introduced activities of a higher level to challenge them. As a result, these pupils are now making much faster gains in their skills and knowledge although some have not yet overcome all of the gaps in their previous learning.
- Pupils' progress in Years 4, 5 and 6 is now as good as in Years 1, 2 and 3 where pupils are developing a comprehensive range of basic skills. In Years 4, 5 and 6 pupils are closing some of the gaps in their earlier learning but some weaknesses remain in their numeracy skills. Some of these pupils do not consistently use the basic skills of punctuation accurately in their work in other subjects as they do in English.
- Pupil premium funding is used well to support those pupils for whom it is intended and, as a result, the progress they make in English and mathematics is as good as, and sometimes better than, that of their classmates. Throughout the school, most pupils eligible for the pupil premium are making faster progress than the rest of the class in reading and writing, though gaps in older pupils' calculation skills affect their achievement in mathematics.

The quality of teaching**is good**

- Teaching has improved since the previous inspection, including in English and mathematics.
- Teachers ask questions to check that pupils understand what they are learning, and use their answers well to move the learning on or go back over what they have taught if necessary to make sure the pupils fully understand.
- Positive relationships, between staff and pupils form the basis of effective learning because no time is wasted as lessons run smoothly.
- Staff give children in the Reception Year varied and interesting tasks, generally weaving skills into activities built upon children's interests.
- Teachers' knowledge of English and mathematics is good so pupils understand their explanations and are clear in their subsequent work. Older pupils are taught to skim read, for example, to find information, and use inference to 'read between the lines' in the wide range of books they read.
- Teachers make sure that pupils know what it means to be a good learner. Pupils know, for example, what to do if they are unsure how to solve a problem or answer a question. They say it helps that they learn about 'super powers' and that their teacher plans activities for them to practise aspects of learning. In the week of the inspection, it was 'resilience' and pupils were learning about skills including trial and error.
- Homework is used well, for example to follow up work done in school and to fill the gaps in older pupils' knowledge. Older pupils enjoy the extra activities their teacher puts on the website for them to follow up after lessons.
- Pupils say the information staff put in classroom displays is very useful to their learning and that if they get stuck, they can use it to help them. One said, 'Lots of our work is on the wall, it reminds us what we have done already.'
- Many aspects of marking are good. Teachers give pupils clear objectives for their work, so they know what to aim at. When they finish, they look back at this and write a short comment about whether they have succeeded or not. Teachers then mark the work, adding their thoughts and ideas for improvements. However, teachers do not always give pupils the chance to read their suggestions. Teachers rarely check they have understood, or that subsequent work improves as a result.
- Pupils tend to find verbal feedback from teachers more helpful than their written marking and say, 'When they talk to you and explain, it is clearer.'
- In some classes, pupils' handwriting is untidy because their teachers do not make sure they follow the school's policy. In many work books, pupils' best handwriting is on the first, not most recent, page.

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

- The behaviour of the pupils is good. The older ones worry that the playground is crowded, and watch out for those who might get knocked over. Pupils say bullying is very rare and any dispute is quickly settled by staff. Exclusions, too, are very rare.

- A real sense of community is fostered because pupils like helping one another. Play leaders teach games to those younger than themselves, older pupils have been trained in how to help the youngest with reading.
- A sense of community starts in Reception. Children were asked to put on a party. They divided up into teams, chose tasks, and worked together to make sure everything was a success. In class, one child will often see another needs help and provide it naturally.
- Pupils are proud of themselves and the progress they make. They know their levels and what they need to do to get better. They like getting rewards for effort and accomplishment, and the fact that these have to be earned and are not just given freely. They say rewards have changed behaviour for the better.
- Pupils like the fact that staff listen to them and take notice of their opinions. For example, the school council visited another school and was pleased when the headteacher did as they asked and copied the system used there, with whole school meetings to canvas all opinions.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Time is given to activities, such as cycle training and how to stay safe when using the internet. Pupils say they feel safe and well-looked after at school.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils have a good understanding of others around the world because they work alongside their London partner school and communicate regularly with pupils in Africa.
- Attendance is above average and has improved because the headteacher has made her expectations very clear. Persistent absence is low.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has a 'no-nonsense' approach which focuses on what is important and what makes a difference to the quality of education offered. Governors, staff, parents and the local authority all agree that the headteacher is dynamic and inspection findings confirm this.
- Teaching is well led. The headteacher regularly checks on teaching and tells staff what they have improved since she observed them last, and what they need to improve next. If she is concerned about their performance, she explains why and returns to see changes have happened.
- Training is given high priority and often chosen for specific purposes. Recent safeguarding training included every member of staff and governors. Staff meetings focus on improving learning.
- Teachers all play important roles in the school, ensuring the subjects they are responsible for are effective so standards rise. Parents notice this, one stating, 'It is much more structured since the new headteacher arrived, my son has come on in leaps and bounds.'
- The curriculum is good because the way it links subjects means that one lesson builds closely on the last. The school has made a good start in its aim 'to develop curious minds'. Pupils say, 'I like the variety of what we do, it keeps things interesting.'

- Sports funding is used well. Additional specialist coaches enhance pupils' techniques and ensure energetic physical activity. Some funding is used so after-school clubs are free and accessible to many more pupils. Play leaders are trained to lead a wide variety of lunchtime games. However, although staff training is planned, it has not yet begun.
- The school nurtures everyone's talents and gives each an equal opportunity to participate in all it offers. Clear procedures are in place to tackle any form of discrimination.
- Parents are very supportive of the school. Parents' comments include: 'A brilliant school,' and, 'The headteacher has really turned it around.' Parents are very appreciative of the links they have, for example, through the parent forum, and say that the headteacher wants to know their opinions.
- The school's work with the local pyramid of schools is good. Within this group, five small schools facing similar challenges work closely together.
- Local authority support is good. Following the previous inspection, specific help was provided to meet the action points. For example, provision for Reception children was re-organised and staff and governors given advice and training to increase their effectiveness.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are pro-active and forward-thinking, looking outward to develop partnerships to extend and increase what the school is able to offer. They are proud of its achievements since the previous inspection. They are very well organised with a clear management structure that enables them to support the school well. Where individual governors have expertise, it is used effectively. They give high status to checking the work of the school, both regularly throughout the year and during an intensive period in the Autumn. Governors are attached to specific targets in the development plan and held accountable to see they get done. A governor attends each pupil progress meeting with staff and the headteacher. Questions are asked to help the school check that every avenue is explored. Individual governors undertake training they need and the whole governing body sets aside a day each year to train together. Its members attend events such as parents' evenings to gather parental views. Governors make sure that staff pay is linked closely to performance. Governors have tackled underperformance and would be resolute should it happen again. Finances are carefully managed and governors know how extra pupil premium funding is used and the impact it makes. They see all statutory requirements are met, including those for safeguarding pupils.

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	124566
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	432104

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	104
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jane Hart
Headteacher	Debbie Gayler
Date of previous school inspection	9 October 2012
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