

Poplars Community Primary School

St Margaret's Road, Lowestoft, NR32 4HN

Inspection dates 24–25 June 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.

- Almost all pupils make good progress, because they are happy, work hard and are well taught. Pupils of all ages and abilities achieve well in reading and mathematics, and very well in writing.
- Pupils with disabilities and those who have special educational needs make good progress because the support they are given is well planned and their progress is tracked carefully.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage enjoy a good range of opportunities to develop their speaking and listening well.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They are polite and show very positive attitudes to learning. Pupils concentrate well on tasks and help each other willingly. They say that they feel safe and enjoy being at school.
- Teaching is good and improving strongly because all leaders and managers have high expectations and track the impact of teaching well. Teachers use their good subject knowledge effectively to plan activities that interest and challenge pupils.
- The headteacher and senior leaders provide strong and effective leadership. They check the progress pupils make regularly, and make sure any extra support needed is put in place quickly. They have a clear view of how to develop an outstanding school experience for pupils in the future.
- Governors are experienced and well trained, offering good support and challenge to school leaders. They have a keen awareness of how school funds should be spent to provide the best benefit for pupils.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- A small minority of pupils make less progress than they could because they do not attend school regularly enough.
- Teachers do not always move pupils on to more demanding work quickly enough.
- The guidance teachers give to pupils on improving spelling and presentation is not consistently clear enough.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 28 lessons, including six joint observations with members of the senior leadership team. In addition, inspectors made short visits to other lessons and saw two assemblies. They looked at samples of pupils' work, interviewed groups of pupils, and heard pupils read from across the age range.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and other members of the senior leadership team, subject co-ordinators, teachers, and members of the governing body. There was a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors scrutinised a variety of documents, including the school's self-evaluation, school-development plans, behaviour records, safeguarding records, governing body documents, and documents relating to the management of teachers' performance.
- Inspectors also considered the views expressed in 41 questionnaires returned by school staff, 80 responses to a school questionnaire for parents and 38 responses submitted by parents to the on-line 'Parent View' survey.

Inspection team

Roger Waddingham, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Maria Rees-Johnson	Additional Inspector
Piers Ranger	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Poplars Community Primary School is larger than the average primary school.
- 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 above average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is well above average. This is additional funding allocated by the government to support pupils looked after by the local authority and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The great majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for the attainment and progress of pupils by the end of Year 6.
- A very small number of pupils receive some of their education through other settings, attending the Harbour referral unit or First Base referral unit for two days each week.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching to outstanding by making sure that teachers:
 - take more account of what pupils are capable of achieving in deciding when to move particular pupils on to more demanding work
 - give pupils consistently clear guidance on how to improve their spelling and presentation.
- Work closely with parents to improve the attendance of pupils who do not attend regularly enough and ensure that these pupils' rates of progress increase.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- On entry to the school, a significant proportion of children have skills below those typical for their age. Most children in both the Nursery and Reception classes make good progress because their opportunities for learning are well planned and appropriately challenging. By the end of the Reception Year they reach the goals expected in nearly all areas of learning. Although they do well in developing their spoken language, their development in literacy is often behind other areas at this stage.
- Standards are rising in Key Stage 1. Recent assessments show that pupils currently at the school in Years 1 and 2 make good progress through effective teaching in lessons and carefully planned support given to individual pupils. As a result, most pupils now reach the expected levels in reading and mathematics by the end of Year 2, despite their low starting points. The development of writing is a strength of the school and many pupils are now performing at a level above that expected by the end of Year 2.
- In the Year 1 national reading check, the proportion of pupils meeting the required level continues to rise. It was above average in 2013. The school offers very effective help to those below the required standard at the end of Year 1, so that by the end of Year 2 nearly all pupils have the expected skills and meet the required level.
- Pupils achieve well in all subjects in Key Stage 2. Last year the proportions of pupils making and exceeding expected levels of progress were securely in line with the national averages. This year, the picture of pupils' progress shown by the school's assessments is even better. This good achievement is confirmed by the good, and sometimes outstanding, quality of work and rates of progress seen in pupils' books and during lessons. The most able pupils make good progress, benefiting from the regular opportunities they are given to explain their ideas.
- The school has an effective system for checking the progress of pupils eligible for pupil premium support and for arranging individual support programmes to help them achieve well. The Year 6 pupils who took the national tests in 2013, attained similar levels to their peers in mathematics. They were, on average, one term behind in reading and two terms behind in writing. Recent assessments show these gaps are set to be well under one term this year in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because the support they are given is well planned and their progress is tracked carefully. In many cases their progress is very rapid. Pupils educated off-site for part of the week show improved motivation and achieve well.
- Pupils' physical development and their well-being are supported effectively by the increasing range of outdoor activities available to them as a result of effective use of the sports funding. They say they are particularly proud of the achievements of the school in team sports.
- Pupils' communication skills are developed strongly. They use their speaking and listening skills with confidence in group work and growth in these skills is also encouraged, for example, through the new school radio station. Pupils show good initiative in problem-solving tasks in mathematics and they access information technology resources well to improve the quality of their written work. Pupils enjoy using the school's library to help them read widely and make good progress in their reading.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is good and improving strongly as a result of the effective arrangements for tracking the impact of teachers' work on pupils' learning, and the careful identification of staff training needs. Senior staff have worked well to ensure that their high expectations for effective planning and marking are put into practice.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, teachers provide good opportunities for children to develop their reading skills. They make sure that activities across all areas of learning interest them and help to sustain their concentration. As a result, they make good progress. Teachers make resources readily accessible to children, who show good perseverance and initiative in using them and this supports their understanding of new ideas well.
- Teachers use their good subject knowledge well to plan activities that interest and challenge pupils. They use real-life examples well to involve pupils, such as planning a timetable for a school trip in mathematics lessons. Teachers promote pupils' language skills well through the use of appropriately demanding subject vocabulary, although in some cases there is not enough emphasis on the accurate spelling of key words.
- Teachers manage behaviour very well, so that consistent expectations are reinforced throughout the school and relationships in all classrooms are very positive. Older pupils in particular show great maturity in their attitudes to activities that require them to work without adult support and in helping others in their learning.
- Support staff are managed well. They use their expertise to help individual pupils and groups of pupils effectively both in class lessons and in small group work. Adults check carefully the progress of pupils receiving extra support out of school for their behaviour to make sure they get the help they need. Classrooms are well organised and are very tidy. An excellent range of displays provide hints and reminders which supports pupils' learning well.
- Questioning is often used well to review previous work and to promote discussion, developing pupils' confidence to take responsibility for their own work and follow their own lines of enquiry. Sometimes teachers do not take enough account of what pupils are capable of achieving in deciding when to move particular pupils on to more demanding work.
- Good examples of marking to move learning on quickly are evident in pupils' writing and mathematics books. Teachers note what has been done well, and, in many cases, give comments for improvement which pupils respond to carefully with their own reflections on the progress they are making. Even so, teachers do not always tell pupils clearly enough how to improve their spelling or ensure that presentation is good enough.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They say that they are happy at school and they enjoy their work in lessons. Their positive attitudes, politeness and concern for others contribute very well to the harmonious working atmosphere in the school.
- Behaviour in lessons is good and sometimes outstanding. Pupils arrive at lessons on time and settle quickly to their work. They listen well to each other and to the class teacher, following instructions carefully. They concentrate well on their work and sustain their interest right through to the end of a lesson.
- Pupils of all ages show good respect to each other and to adults. They look after the buildings

and displays well and they move around the school in a calm and safe manner. The start of the school day and break times are orderly and pupils show a good degree of responsibility in playing together. They also enjoy taking responsibility for aspects of school life and take part readily, for example, in the work of the school council.

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils have great confidence in the school's procedures to deal with any bullying incidents or incidents of a racial nature. They say that such situations are very rare and they feel very safe in the school. The positive comments from pupils and staff about the low incidence of bullying are well supported by the school's detailed records.
- Attendance is improving, although it is still below the national average. In particular, the proportion of pupils absent for over 30 days per year is above average. As a result, they make progress that is not as fast as other pupils. The attendance of pupils is tracked in detail so that support for those with poor attendance is offered when needed.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and senior leaders provide strong and effective leadership, They have a clear view of how to develop an outstanding school experience for pupils in the future because the actions they plan are based on a thorough and regular review of all aspects of teaching and learning in the school.
- A key factor in the strongly rising trend of achievement in the school is the emphasis placed on the regular tracking of pupils' attainment and progress. Senior staff and year team leaders use this information very effectively to check progress in each class and make sure any extra support needed is put in place very quickly.
- Subject leaders use tracking information and evidence from pupils' written work well to identify areas for improvement. Whole-school and subject action plans are well coordinated and their impact is reviewed regularly.
- The school's arrangements for evaluating and improving teaching are very well organised. Managers gather a very good range of evidence to identify points for development and staff report that their professional training needs are met well by what the school provides.
- The school offers a very good range of learning experiences for pupils. Pupils say they appreciate the opportunities to develop their independent learning skills that they are offered through topic work and problem-solving activities. The primary sports funding is used very well to improve the quality of physical education teaching and to extend the range of sports, competitive games and physical activities available to pupils. Uptake of sports clubs and other after school activities is high.
- The support for disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and those in receipt of the pupil premium is well managed and their progress is good. The impact of individual and group support from specialist staff together with support in class is monitored carefully by the co-ordinator and adjusted in the light of pupils' progress.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet current national requirements, with staff well trained in both welfare and safety procedures. Leaders have a clear commitment to equality of opportunity and ensuring there is no discrimination. The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual and moral development in school assemblies and class 'Circle Time', and social and cultural

development are promoted well through the range of topics planned for each year group.

- The local authority has given 'light touch' support to the school as recent monitoring has shown that it is making good progress.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors have responded very effectively to the findings from the review commissioned last year. They have increased the frequency of meetings for the school improvement committee and are now taking a more active part in visiting the school to talk to responsibility holders. They make sure all members of the governing body have appropriate training opportunities.
- Governors are well informed about strengths and development areas in the school because they commission a comprehensive range of reports from senior, subject and year leaders.
- They have a good understanding of school performance data and offer very good support and challenge to school leaders through their questioning at meetings.
- Governors know what the school is doing to develop teaching and to tackle any underperformance. They oversee the procedures for teachers' pay progression and were actively involved in developing the policy for this.
- Governors regularly review the expenditure of the pupil premium and the sports premium, and check that the funded actions offer good value for money in their impact on pupils' achievement.

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	124639
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	447421

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	543
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sue Barrett
Headteacher	Lynsey Holzer
Date of previous school inspection	19 June 2013
Telephone number	01502 565757
Fax number	01502 524189
Email address	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. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email 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, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: 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 and 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.

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
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2014

