

# Puss Bank School

Barracks Lane, Macclesfield, Cheshire, Sk10 1QJ

**Inspection dates** 24–25 June 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Pupils make good progress and achieve well in all key stages, including in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Attainment has risen in recent years and is now above average.
- The proportion of pupils making the progress expected of them and doing better than this in English and mathematics is in line with national averages and growing.
- Pupils with special educational needs, including those for whom the school receives extra funding, achieve well because of the highly effective and skilful support that they receive.
- Pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals achieve as well as other pupils in the school.
- Teaching is good with some that is outstanding. Activities in lessons stimulate pupils' interest. Teachers expect the pupils in their classes to work hard and are rarely disappointed.
- Pupils' communication skills are impressive. They express themselves and their thoughts clearly and maturely.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. They are unfailingly polite and respectful to each other and the adults working with them.
- In lessons pupils work hard and with keen interest. They are eager to learn and to give of their best.
- Pupils say that they feel very safe in school. They have a firm understanding of how to stay safe, especially when using social networking sites, for example.
- Leaders and managers know what the school does well and where it could do better. They have a sharp and effective focus on improving the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.
- The governing body holds the school to account with increasing rigour and is very supportive of leaders' and managers' efforts to make the school more effective.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough pupils make more than the progress expected of them in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teaching does not consistently have enough impact on pupils' learning and progress to drive up achievement to outstanding.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning on 21 occasions taught by members of the teaching staff and teaching assistants. One observation was undertaken jointly with the deputy headteacher. Inspectors listened to two groups of pupils read. Inspectors also visited groups where phonics (blending letter sounds to make words) was being taught.
- Inspectors observed the work of the school and looked at a range of documentation, including the school's view of its own performance, safeguarding and child-protection arrangements, behaviour and attendance, the quality of teaching and minutes of the governing body meetings. A sample of pupils' work in books was also examined.
- Inspectors held a series of formal and informal discussions with pupils to discuss their experience of school, and particularly their learning, behaviour and safety. Discussions were also held with the senior and middle leaders.
- An inspector spoke with three members of the governing body, including the Chair and vice chair of governors. An inspector also spoke to a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of 45 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). An inspector also spoke to 15 parents as they collected or dropped off their children at school. Inspectors also considered 18 questionnaires completed by staff.

## Inspection team

Stephen Wall, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Emily Wheeldon

Additional Inspector

Marilyn Massey

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Puss Bank is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic heritages is below average, as is the proportion who speak English an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils supported by pupil premium funding is broadly average. (The pupil premium provides additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those children looked after by the local authority.)
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is below average. However, the proportion supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school provides seven places for pupils identified as being on the autistic spectrum. Each of these pupils has a statement of special educational needs. The school receives extra funding from the local authority to support these pupils.
- Since the previous inspection there have been a significant number of staffing changes including the appointment of the current headteacher and deputy headteacher in September 2010.

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

- Continue to improve the quality and impact of teaching to raise achievement further by ensuring that:
  - activities are always at the right level of challenge for different groups of learners, especially pupils of average ability
  - make more regular and effective use of sharing the best teaching that exists in the school.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- The majority of children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are below those normally expected for their age.
- They make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes because teaching provides them with a wide range of stimulating activities both indoors and outside.
- In Key Stage 1, pupils continue to achieve well. By the end of Year 2, attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is broadly average and rising.
- Pupils in Key Stage 2 achieve well. Attainment has risen in recent years and is above average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The proportion of pupils making the progress expected of them and the proportion doing better than this, in 2013, were above national figures in writing and mathematics but not as high in reading. The school has tackled this relative weakness robustly. As a result, pupils' reading skills have improved significantly. School data, supported by inspection evidence from observing teaching and learning, listening to pupils read and discussions with pupils, show that the proportion of pupils making the progress expected of them and the proportion doing better than this in reading are now in line with writing and mathematics.
- At the end of Year 6 in 2013 there was no gap in attainment between pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and their classmates because the school used extra funding effectively to provide support and tracked the progress of these pupils accurately. School data, supported by inspection evidence, show that, currently, this is still the case.
- The most able students achieve very well because activities in lessons are challenging enough to fuel their ambition. In 2013 at the end of Key Stage 2 all of the most able pupils attained the higher levels in the national tests. Increasing numbers are attaining the highest National Curriculum Level 6.
- However, pupils of average ability do not always achieve as well as they could because activities in lessons are sometimes too challenging for them, and this slows their progress.
- Pupils who are from minority ethnic heritages and/or speak English as an additional language make good progress and achieve well because of the effective support that they receive.
- Pupils with special educational needs, including those pupils on the autistic spectrum, achieve well because of the skilful and dedicated support that they receive. This demonstrates the school's strong and successful commitment to providing equality of opportunity for its more vulnerable pupils.
- Good teaching enables pupils to make good and improving progress in literacy and numeracy. Pupils enjoy reading and read regularly at home and in school. They have a wide range of opportunities to develop their writing skills and to apply their basic number skills to solving problems. Pupils have highly developed speaking skills which they use exceptionally well to express their thoughts and ideas articulately and confidently.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Good teaching with some that is outstanding enables pupils to make good and improving progress across the school.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage children enjoy a wide range of stimulating activities both indoors and outdoors that are matched closely to their individual needs. As a result children make good progress in all areas of their development including in basic number, writing and reading skills.
- In Key Stages 1 and 2 teachers plan activities that stimulate pupils' interest and generally enable them to make rapid and secure progress.
- Teachers know the pupils in their classes well and set activities that are challenging, especially

for the most able. However, sometimes the activities are somewhat too challenging for pupils of average ability and this leads to some uncertainty and slows their progress.

- Teaching is very adept at using questioning that requires pupils to give extended answers and reasons for their thoughts. This has a very significant impact on pupils' readiness and ability to express themselves clearly and with confidence.
- In a mixed-age class of Year 3 and Year 4 pupils, for example, skilful and probing questions on how advertising uses persuasive techniques and language resulted in answers that showed pupils' deep understanding and ability to express themselves with a skill that belied their age. 'I think we should all be very cautious when we read adverts or see them on the television because they try to manipulate the way we feel.' was one example of such high-level use of spoken language.
- In response to a dip in attainment in reading in 2013, teaching has stepped up and sharpened its focus on improving pupils' reading skills. Daily guided reading sessions now concentrate sharply and successfully on improving pupils' comprehension skills and the accuracy with which they use language to form their responses.
- The teaching of writing and mathematical skills is assured. Pupils enjoy the opportunities that they have to write creatively across different subjects and to apply their mathematical skills to solving problems.
- Pupils who find learning difficult or have special educational needs, including those on the autistic spectrum, benefit from the support of knowledgeable and dedicated teaching assistants.
- Teachers mark pupils' written work regularly and accurately. Their comments are helpful in showing pupils what they need to do to improve their work.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Their behaviour and positive attitudes to learning are major contributing factors to their good and improving achievement.
- They are highly respectful to each other, the adults working with them and to visitors. Pupils are exceptionally polite. 'Please', 'thank you' and 'you're welcome' are the norm.
- In lessons, pupils are exceptionally keen to learn and give of their best. Around school they behave maturely and have a high level of respect for school rules. They are exceptionally tolerant and understanding of pupils who have special educational needs.
- Pupils wear their uniforms with pride and take equal pride in the presentation of their written work. The handwriting in the vast majority of pupils' books is of the highest quality.
- Attendance is above average and improving.
- The school's work to keep its pupils safe and secure is outstanding.
- Pupils are acutely aware of what constitute potentially dangerous situations and how to deal with or avoid them. This extends to knowledge and awareness about safe use of the internet and new technologies.
- Pupils say that bullying of any kind is rare and that teachers are quick to deal effectively with any isolated incidents. Their view is confirmed by school records over time, these show very few incidents.
- The school knows all of its pupils as individuals. It provides strong support for those whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable and for those with special educational needs to make sure that they are happy and safe in school and do as well as they can.
- The vast majority of parents are happy with the standards of behaviour in the school.

**The leadership and management are good**

- The headteacher provides the school with determined and purposeful leadership. She is ably supported by the deputy headteacher and other leaders and managers, who all work well as a team.
- Leaders know what the school does well and where it could do better. Planning for future improvement is of high quality and focuses sharply on making the school more effective.
- Leaders and managers have tackled weaknesses in teaching successfully in recent years. Checking on the quality of teaching is regular and accurate. Leaders use the outcomes effectively to identify staff training needs. As a result the quality of teaching is good. Leaders accept, however, that they do not make effective enough use of the best teaching in school as a model of best of best practice to raise achievement further.
- Leaders and managers track regularly the progress of each pupil towards demanding targets. They identify and tackle any signs of underachievement at an early stage. Pupils' progress is an integral part of checking on teachers' performance and is central to decisions about salary increases.
- Subject leaders and other middle managers are clear about their responsibilities and what is expected of them. They are enthusiastic and keen to improve the school. Their work is providing highly effective support for putting into practise the headteacher's vision of how successful the school can be
- The curriculum meets pupils' needs. It provides plenty of opportunities for pupils to read widely and write at length. There is an extensive range of popular activities outside lessons in sports and the arts as well as trips out that add extra enjoyment to pupils' experience of school and broaden their horizons.
- Primary school sports funding is used well to extend the range of sports that are provided for pupils. In particular, the school has promoted successfully pupils' participation in competitive sports and competitions with a record of considerable success.
- Pupils' outstanding behaviour, their keen sense of right and wrong, their understanding and tolerance of those who are different show the school's success in developing pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural qualities and in equipping them well for future life in a multicultural society.
- The school has developed good relations with the vast majority of parents, who respect the school and the education it provides for their children.
- The local authority provides this good and improving school with light-touch support.
- Procedures and policies for safeguarding pupils are fully in place and active. The school rejects discrimination in all its forms.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body holds the school to account effectively. Training ensures that governors understand fully how well the school is doing in comparison to other similar schools locally and nationally. This enables them to ask the necessary questions about the school's effectiveness and where it could improve. Reports from the headteacher and other leaders and managers ensure that the governing body knows the quality of teaching and how it is improving. The governing body understands and is fully involved in the management of staff performance and link this closely to decisions about salary increases. Governors have a firm grasp on the school's finances, including how pupil premium funding is allocated and the impact that it has on the achievement of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.

## 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>	132807
<b>Local authority</b>	Cheshire East
<b>Inspection number</b>	444055

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>	398
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	David Neilson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Kathy Nichol
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	2 March 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01625 384384
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