

Poulner Junior School

North Poulner Road, North Poulner, Ringwood, Hampshire BH24 3LA

Inspection dates

10–11 January 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Require improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Historically, the school's self-evaluation has been inaccurate and lacked rigour. The majority of senior leaders are very new to their roles and have not yet had time to embed new systems. Consequently, improvement planning is not yet effective.
- Until recently, governors have not held leaders and teachers to account for the progress that pupils make.
- Leaders' recent actions to improve teaching and pupils' outcomes have not yet resulted in consistent improvement across all year groups.
- Some teachers do not set work at the right level for pupils, particularly the most able, in mathematics, science and the wider curriculum.
- Too many pupils are not working at the expected standards for their ages in mathematics.
- Disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities do not make sufficient progress. In addition, boys do not achieve as well as girls.
- Although the curriculum is broad and balanced, the quality of teaching, particularly in the wider curriculum, is variable.
- Some pupils are not confident in their understanding of issues relating to different cultures and religious beliefs.
- The school website does not meet statutory requirements.

The school has the following strengths

- Poulner offers a caring and inclusive community. As a result, pupils feel safe, well cared for and valued.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. Parents and pupils appreciate the rich variety of extra-curricular clubs, trips and visits that the school offers.
- Emotional support for vulnerable pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is particularly strong.
- Since her arrival in September 2016, the new deputy headteacher has revitalised the quality of teaching. Staff are united in their efforts to raise standards. New feedback and assessment systems are already evident, though not yet well developed.
- Some teaching is very strong. Where teaching is most effective, teachers know their pupils well and design tasks to meet their needs. Where this happens, pupils make rapid progress, particularly in reading and writing.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the consistency of the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring that:
 - all teachers set work that is well matched to pupils' abilities, and prior learning, particularly for the most able pupils
 - teachers' approaches to developing mathematical reasoning and problem solving match the best examples already in the school
 - accurate assessment informs teachers' planning to raise pupils' achievements in science and the wider curriculum.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership at all levels, by ensuring that accurate self-evaluation enables:
 - improvement plans to be based on a thorough diagnosis of the strengths and weaknesses of the school
 - even better progress by disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities
 - boys to make the same levels of progress as girls in all year groups
 - governors to more robustly hold leaders to account for improvements.
- Improve pupils' understanding of different faiths and cultures in order to better prepare them for life in modern Britain.
- Ensure that the school's policies and website are up to date and compliant with statutory requirements.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Governors have worked tirelessly to ensure that the school has sufficient leaders and teachers, following a period of considerable staffing turbulence. At the time of this inspection, the acting headteacher and assistant headteacher had been in post for one week and one of the deputy headteachers had only been appointed the previous term. Even so, leaders have quickly formed a cohesive team and have motivated staff to build on the improvements to the quality of teaching of reading and writing which began last year.
- Over the last year, leaders have worked well with local authority advisers and other local schools to implement effective short-term improvements. As a result of highly focused staff training, new teaching approaches and regular monitoring, the quality of teaching has improved. Outcomes for Year 6 in 2016 improved, particularly in writing. However, school self-evaluation and assessment systems are not yet accurate or robust enough. This means that these improvements are not rapid enough or consistently applied across all classes.
- New leaders and governors are aware that school self-evaluation and improvement plans lack precision. Current plans do not focus sharply enough on how teaching needs to be refined in mathematics, science and the humanities. Nor do they identify precise targets to improve the progress made by boys, disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Leaders' plans provide for a broad curriculum. However, pupils are not routinely applying their English and mathematical skills across different subject areas. Although there are some strengths in art and history, coverage of the science, design technology and geography curriculum is weak, particularly in Years 5 and 6.
- Subject leaders have only recently been involved in monitoring the quality of teaching in their different subject areas across the school. Consequently, they have not had sufficient opportunity to challenge improvements to the quality of teaching in subjects other than English and mathematics.
- Leaders set targets for teachers and teaching assistants to improve their practice. Much of the teaching in reading and writing, and some of the teaching in mathematics, has improved this year. However, more work needs to be done to share best practice to ensure that consistently good teaching, learning and assessment across the school challenges all groups of pupils.
- The systems that hold teachers to account for the quality of teaching do not focus sharply enough on outcomes across all subjects. Monitoring systems are new and not yet embedded sufficiently. As well as lesson observations, more robust and routine scrutiny of pupils' work is needed to evaluate the progress of different groups of pupils across the curriculum.
- The leader of special educational needs works hard to ensure that effective use is made of the extra funding available for this group of pupils. In addition to in-class support, teaching assistants now provide focused small-group interventions each afternoon for these and other pupils who may have struggled with literacy or mathematics during the morning sessions. However, due to the variability in the quality of teaching and learning this support is not yet as effective as it could be. More needs

to be done to raise expectations and ensure that teachers and teaching assistants work well together to meet the needs of these pupils in every class.

- An external review of the impact of pupil premium funding was undertaken last year and leaders have implemented its recommendations. As a result, these pupils receive a range of interventions ranging from small-group tuition to wider family support, and many are making improved progress. However, due to weaknesses in the school's self-evaluation, leaders are not yet clear about which strategies work best.
- In the past, leaders have not ensured that sports funding has been used appropriately or that it was all accounted for. There are a wide variety of after-school sporting clubs which pupils enjoy, but the quality of teaching and learning in physical education is variable. A lack of equipment on the playground at break and lunchtimes means that there are limited opportunities to promote fitness through play.
- Leaders ensure that the school's values: resilience, resourcefulness, reflection and relationships, are embedded across the curriculum, assemblies and the life of the school. Pupils are encouraged to be aspirational and a range of trips and residential visits enable them to broaden their horizons. Although diversity and tolerance are promoted, pupils are not confident to express their understanding of different faiths and cultures. More needs to be done to ensure that they are better prepared for life in modern diverse and multicultural Britain.
- The school offers an open and friendly environment for pupils, parents and visitors. However, a minority of parents commented, either directly to inspectors or through Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, that communication is not as good as it could be. The new leaders and governors are aware of this and have already planned evening events to improve communication.
- The vast majority of staff who completed Ofsted's survey are proud to be a member of the school and feel well supported by the leadership team and their colleagues. They recognise the improvements the school has made and are motivated by the recent training and development opportunities.

Governance of the school

- The chair of the governing body took up post last year. She has prioritised auditing the skills of the governing body and restructuring how they work, based on the recommendations of the recent external review. New members have been recruited and the governing body now offers a good range of expertise including educational, business and financial backgrounds.
- Regular visits keep governors informed about standards at the school and they have access to appropriate training and resources. Records of governors' meetings evidence the increasing level of support and challenge that they offer leaders. In the past, governors' level of challenge has been limited due to leaders' inaccurate or incomplete school self-evaluation and interpretations of progress information. Governors are well aware of the need to sharpen self-evaluation and strategic planning in order to ensure that clear targets are set for improvements.
- Governors are aware of how pupil premium funding and funding for special educational needs is being used and challenge leaders to ensure that these are prioritised to meet the needs of the pupils.
- Governors are aware that the school website is not compliant with regulations. More needs to be done to ensure that all information and policies published on the school website meet statutory requirements and are fully up to date.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Staff, parents and pupils agree that the school offers a safe, secure and inclusive environment.
- There are effective systems in place to secure the well-being and safety of pupils. Although record-keeping could be improved, leaders work diligently to engage wider expertise to offer timely support for vulnerable pupils.
- Leaders work effectively with parents and other stakeholders to ensure a culture of safeguarding. All staff and governors receive regular up-to-date training and are well informed about safeguarding matters. This means that they are able to carry out the school's procedures well, ensuring a culture of vigilance.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is not yet consistently good across the school, or within some subjects. As a result, not all pupils secure good progress over time in mathematics, and achievement in science and the wider curriculum is weak.
- Not all teachers and teaching assistants have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve. Too often, learning tasks that are set for the most able pupils are too easy. With the exception of some history lessons, pupils are not routinely required to think deeply enough or apply their literacy and mathematics skills in new contexts.
- Where teaching meets pupils' needs well, they are motivated to learn, behave very well and make strong progress over time. Where teaching is less effective, it is not closely matched to pupils' starting points and learning activities can lack pace and challenge.
- Most teachers check pupils' learning in lessons and provide useful feedback which pupils use to improve their work. The strongest examples of this were seen in pupils' English lessons. In other areas of the curriculum, teachers are less effective at identifying and addressing gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding. Where this happens, pupils, predominantly the most able, do not receive sufficient challenge.
- New systems for interrogating pupils' performance are now being used to hold teachers to account for the progress pupils make from their starting points. Leaders' systems for tracking the progress of groups, including disadvantaged pupils and the most able pupils, are less well developed. This prevents teachers and teaching assistants from planning extra help and challenge as strategically as they could.
- Teachers' use of small-group work is not always effective. As a result, not all pupils fully understand the tasks that they have been set. When the work set is not matched well enough to the needs of the pupils, then a small minority struggle to concentrate and drift off task. This slows the pace of learning.
- Teachers and teaching assistants are receiving ongoing training in mathematics. The new approaches that are being shared have not yet had sufficient time to become fully embedded and progress in mathematics across the school remains too variable.
- As a result of training over the last year, there has been a clear focus on improving the standards of reading and writing in English lessons. Teachers have improved their subject knowledge and plan appropriate activities to promote progress. Pupils read with fluency appropriate to their age. New guided reading sessions introduced recently have promoted improved understanding of texts and have become popular with older pupils in particular.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Supporting the personal development of the pupils is at the heart of the school's work and very positive working relationships exist between staff and pupils. Although a small minority of parents raised concerns, the majority told inspectors that they value the support that staff willingly provide. Recognising the family atmosphere and dedication of staff at Poulner Juniors, one parent spoke for many when they reported, 'The teachers work so hard they spend more time with everyone else's children than they do their own.'
- Pupils are safe and secure in the school and they feel happy here. The family liaison officer ensures that pupils who feel vulnerable are offered timely support and guidance, helping them to develop emotional resilience and improved social skills. Parents and pupils overwhelmingly affirmed that pupils feel happy and well looked after at school.
- Learning about e-safety is given an appropriately high priority. Pupils value the opportunities that they have to learn about keeping themselves safe, in and around the school as well as online.
- Pupils understand the importance of staying healthy through regular exercise and eating healthily. They spoke enthusiastically to inspectors about getting involved in the after-school sporting clubs and their enjoyment of physical education. Leaders and governors are aware that more needs to be done to provide outdoor play equipment to promote fitness through more active play during break and lunchtimes.
- Through the school council pupils are encouraged to take responsibility to look after each other and the wider community. Currently pupils are raising funds to purchase a defibrillator which will be made available to the various community groups that use the school facilities. Pupils speak with pride about this and their past support for a range of other charitable causes.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Staff apply clear school policies for rewards and sanctions which are understood by the pupils. These help pupils to manage their own behaviour well and make the right choices. Nearly all pupils are focused on performing well in class and respond well to the praise and rewards that their teachers offer.
- Pupils are courteous, polite and confident to talk to visitors. They have a clear understanding of right and wrong, conduct around the school is good and most play sensibly on the playground at break and lunchtime. Pupils care for each other. They report that they feel that it is their duty to quickly spot if another pupil is upset or hurt and make sure that this is brought to the attention of staff.
- Overall attendance has been better than, or in line with, the national average for the last three years. Pupils, parents and governors value the effective support offered to vulnerable pupils by the highly dedicated family liaison officer and inclusions manager. Together they have ensured that the small cohort of pupils with high persistent absence figures have attended more regularly this year.

- Pupils say that behaviour is usually good. They know exactly what bullying is and have a good understanding of most forms of prejudice-based bullying, such as racism, which they know is unacceptable. Pupils report that they know who to go to, and that they trust staff to resolve any issues, should they have any concerns.
- Nearly all staff and the large majority of parents who spoke to inspectors, or responded to Parent View, are of the view that behaviour is good. Although some parents expressed reservations, teachers' records demonstrate that behaviour is typically good over time. Leaders are aware that paperwork and record-keeping could be improved to better inform governors of a more thorough evaluation of behavioural trends and patterns over time.
- In nearly all lessons pupils show an enthusiasm for their learning and engage well in the tasks they are given. In a very small minority of lessons the behaviour of some groups is less focused. This occurs when not all pupils have the challenge they need to maintain their interest or keep them fully engaged in their work. As a result, where this occurs a small number of pupils can drift off task or disrupt learning with chatter.

Outcomes for pupils

Require improvement

- As a result of training and support, outcomes in 2016 improved from previous years. Pupils who left the school in the summer of 2016 made expected progress overall and better than expected progress in writing. However, the proportion of pupils who achieved age-related expectations in mathematics was below the national average. Middle-attaining pupils, and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, made less progress than they should have in mathematics.
- The new school assessment and tracking systems are not yet used effectively enough to eradicate differences in the progress made by different groups of pupils. Books show that in mathematics, although there is evidence that pupils make expected progress in some classes, there are inconsistencies depending on the quality of teaching over time. The overall rate of progress in mathematics, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, is too slow.
- Overall, the progress of current pupils is stronger in reading and writing than in mathematics. However, boys are not making the same strong progress as girls. In addition, the differences between the progress made by disadvantaged pupils and their peers are not diminishing fast enough.
- Pupil's books evidence that they do not regularly apply their skills to write in depth when they learn about science, technology or the humanities. Although there are some strengths in history and art, coverage of the science curriculum is weak and that of other subjects is variable. Therefore, progress is too slow, particularly for the most able pupils.
- New systems monitor the progress of individual pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Teachers and teaching assistants offer bespoke interventions to those who require support to catch up. Inspectors witnessed how good relationships underpin the support given in these sessions. However, leaders are aware that more needs to be done to improve staff subject knowledge and raise expectations so that this group make better progress from their starting points.
- There have been marked improvements in the rate of overall progress across the school since September 2016. This is due to senior leaders' determination to improve

standards and their introduction of more focused systems for assessment and monitoring.

- Pupils' punctuation, grammar and spelling skills are improving and the standard of their presentation of work in English and mathematics is generally good. Evidence of improving progress in these areas can be seen in pupils' books, where work is carefully laid out and checked by teachers.
- Parents were keen to share with inspectors that they felt that, due to the school's good relationships with other local schools, pupils are well prepared for life in secondary school.

School details

Unique reference number	115999
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10024507

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	331
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Gail Radford
Acting headteacher	Paul Brown
Telephone number	01425 474 590
Website	www.poulnerjuniorschool.com
Email address	headteacher@poulner-jun.hants.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	16–17 December 2014

Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about the content of the curriculum on its website.
- Poulner Junior School is larger than the average primary school.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is lower than average. Very few of the pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, who are supported by the pupil premium funding, is in line with the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is in line with the national average. However, the proportion with education, health and care plans or statements of special educational needs is well below national figures.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards. These standards set the minimum expectations for pupils' outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors reviewed the checks made on staff about their suitability to work with children.
- Inspectors visited 22 lessons and an assembly in order to gather evidence to contribute to inspectors' evaluation of the quality of teaching, learning, and assessment. Many of these observations were conducted jointly with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with the acting headteacher, deputy headteachers, middle leaders, members of the governing body and two representatives from the local authority.
- Inspectors talked to pupils about their learning and looked at the work in their books across a range of subjects. They spoke to pupils on the playground and during lessons, and met with two groups of pupils to gather their views.
- Inspectors talked to pupils about reading and heard some of the pupils read.
- Conversations were held with a number of parents at the end of the school day. Inspectors also considered the views expressed in the 77 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, many of which included written comments.
- A wide range of school documentation was scrutinised, including that relating to policies, strategic planning documents, safety, self-evaluation documents, pupils' achievement and behaviour and attendance information.

Inspection team

Matthew Newberry, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Alan Jenner	Ofsted Inspector
Sara Benn	Ofsted Inspector

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