

Poulner Junior School

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

Inspection dates

21–22 May 2019

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders have transformed the school. They have established high expectations and ambition for all. Staff and pupils alike embrace the strong sense of purpose.
- Leaders have systematically improved the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across the school. These are now good overall. Leaders are further strengthening teachers' skills to ensure that the most able pupils are consistently challenged.
- The wider curriculum is currently under review. Pupils enjoy the full breadth of national curriculum subjects but their learning in the wider curriculum is not consistently as deep as leaders intend.
- Pupils make strong progress overall. However, the most able do not make the consistently strong progress required to secure the higher standards of attainment in writing and mathematics.
- Support for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds is well considered and effective. Current disadvantaged pupils make very strong progress because of this support.
- The leadership of the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is highly effective. Pupils with SEND now make excellent progress from their starting points.
- There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. Leaders work well with many external agencies. They provide regular training to ensure that all staff understand their role in keeping children safe.
- Governors are dedicated to the school and give much time to support it. However, they have not remained focused on their strategic role. They have not systematically held leaders to account, including for the use of additional funding.
- Leaders and advisers from the local authority have worked well together to access appropriate specialist support when required.
- Pupils are happy, confident and proud of their school and their learning. They behave well and demonstrate respect to each other and to visitors.
- Pupils enjoy the wide range of extra-curricular activities provided, especially those that develop their health and fitness.
- Pupils' attendance is in line with national averages. Leaders' work to reduce persistent absence has been effective.
- Most parents and carers are extremely positive about the changes that leaders have made to the school. They recognise and appreciate the improvements that have been achieved.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to strengthen the wider curriculum so that it is consistently broad and balanced.
- Further develop teachers' skills so that the most able pupils are consistently challenged to attain the higher standards, especially in writing and mathematics.
- Ensure that governors have a secure knowledge of their roles and responsibilities and hold leaders to account more robustly, including for the use of additional funding.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders have rapidly improved the school. They have established an ambitious vision and set high standards. They have systematically supported staff to develop their knowledge and skills so that all can work together to deliver the best provision for pupils. Staff at all levels have embraced leaders' vision and work tirelessly to ensure that improvements are secured.
- Leaders have an excellent understanding of the school's strengths and further aspects for development. They use their analysis of each part of the provision to carefully prioritise actions and secure improvements. They have provided well-considered and extremely effective professional development for staff. This has improved the quality of teaching, learning and assessment throughout the school.
- Staff are overwhelmingly positive about the work of leaders. Staff relish the high expectations and challenge that leaders provide because they are also supported well to improve. They feel valued and can see the impact of their hard work. They are proud to be part of the school. Teachers new to the profession are supported very well as they start their teaching careers.
- The leadership of the provision for pupils with SEND is a strength of the school. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) has established clear lines of accountability for these pupils. She has ensured that staff have the knowledge to support the learning of pupils with SEND effectively. She has engaged with parents and pupils very well. Consequently, this group of pupils are making excellent progress from their starting points.
- Leaders have also successfully transformed the provision for disadvantaged pupils. They have carefully analysed the barriers to learning experienced by these pupils and tailored their work with them accordingly, including reaching out to their families. The success of the approach can be measured in the upturn in current disadvantaged pupils' attainment and the very strong progress that they now make.
- Similarly, leaders' actions to reduce the persistent absence of a small group of pupils have worked well. Leaders have engaged with a wide range of external agencies and ensured that communication is strong.
- Middle leaders are increasingly effective because they have been trained well and given time to undertake their responsibilities. The open and continual communication throughout the school means that discussions about learning and teaching are ongoing. There is a palpable buzz of excitement when staff discuss ways to identify and meet pupils' needs.
- Leaders and the local authority have worked very successfully together. The local authority has provided a range of advisers who have helped to provide specific expertise when needed, for example to train middle leaders to coach their colleagues effectively. This support has been timely and managed well by all concerned.
- Leaders have prioritised the improvement of English, mathematics and science and have recently turned their attention to the wider curriculum. While pupils study all

aspects of the national curriculum, leaders are working to ensure that there is appropriate depth and breadth of learning throughout the school.

- Leaders support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well, for example through a 'British values' week and assemblies. However, they have not systematically checked that pupils retain the learning from these activities.
- Most parents are extremely positive about the school, especially the changes since the arrival of the headteacher and the care and concern shown by all staff. A typical comment stated: 'Since joining the school two years ago, the headteacher and her team have reviewed, reshaped and reinvigorated every aspect of the school. They have worked with determination and vigour to ensure that pupils get a great start. The care afforded to my children has been first-class.'
- A very small minority of parents raised concerns about communication with school leaders. Inspectors found a wide range of communication channels that have been set up by the headteacher, including regular newsletters, a monthly parent forum, termly written reports and two formal face-to-face meetings for parents and teachers every year.

Governance of the school

- Governors are dedicated to the school and give much of their time to support various events for pupils and parents. They speak at special focus learning days, join staff training and undertake learning walks with leaders so that they can fully understand the experience of pupils. However, possibly because of this extensive support, they have not discharged their duties as governors consistently or effectively.
- Governors do not have a secure knowledge of their strategic role and responsibilities. Consequently, they have not rigorously held leaders to account. They know what actions leaders have taken, but not what difference these have made for pupils.
- Governors have not systematically scrutinised the use of additional funding and do not know what impact it has had for pupils.
- Some governors are trained in safer recruitment. They use this knowledge well to ensure that recruitment processes meet safeguarding requirements.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders ensure that all staff have a secure knowledge of the local and national safeguarding issues. Staff throughout the school understand how to look out for signs and indications that a pupil might be at risk. Staff training is routinely revisited to ensure that this knowledge remains current. Leaders have also refined the processes for recording concerns so that staff can report any worry quickly and that all parts of the picture may be clearly captured.
- Leaders work very well with families and external agencies to make sure that any pupil's need is acted on quickly and that any support is sustained for as long as it is needed.

- Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe at the school because there is always someone who will listen to them and take them seriously. The overwhelming majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, agreed that their child feels safe at school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good overall because teachers and teaching assistants have embraced the continual training and high expectations introduced by leaders.
- Staff have built very strong relationships with pupils and there is a sense of purposeful excitement in lessons. Pupils understand how tasks 'join up' to help them to make progress with their learning. For example, a Year 5 pupil explained that by working out how punctuation was used to create tension in the book he was studying, he was learning how to control and add power to his own writing.
- Assessment is increasingly effective throughout the school. Teachers and teaching assistants use it to help them identify what pupils know and what they need to know next. They swiftly intervene if pupils need extra help with their learning, and they plan very well for pupils with SEND. However, most-able pupils are not consistently challenged to reach the higher standards, especially in writing and mathematics.
- Some pupils require extra help with their phonics when they join the school. Staff plan these lessons carefully and match them to pupils' needs. They have helped pupils to improve their reading and spelling. Similarly, pupils who needed extra support with their handwriting have made excellent progress because of the well-planned and delivered sessions.
- Reading is taught well throughout the school. There is a strong culture of reading and pupils discuss books thoughtfully and with interest. Guided reading activities are matched well to pupils' needs and provide increasing challenge for the most able.
- Pupils are keen to write and to share their writing with visitors. They enjoy crafting their work to improve its accuracy and to select more powerful vocabulary. They explain their writing choices well.
- Pupils' learning in mathematics is also developed well. Staff adapt activities based on how well pupils have retained knowledge. There is a focus on reasoning and problem-solving. However, occasionally, the most able pupils have to wait for other pupils to catch up with their learning before they move onto more challenging tasks.
- Science is planned well. Activities support pupils to develop secure knowledge. Apparatus is used effectively and to support pupils' understanding. Pupils enjoy the investigations and experiments they conduct.
- There is still some inconsistency of staff knowledge in the wider curriculum. The joint planning helps to overcome this, but there is sometimes a lack of cohesion between learning activities. For example, some pupils struggled to identify place names on a map in a history lesson because their geographical map-reading skills were not secure enough.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are proud of their school and their 'HEART' values of 'honesty, excellence, attitude, respect and thoughtfulness'. They work hard to demonstrate these in and out of lessons and recognise that others do as well.
- They have a clear understanding of what bullying is and say that it does not happen very much at school. They are confident that, when it does happen, every member of staff will listen to them and resolve it quickly and successfully. They are proud that pupils at the school are kind to each other, whatever their background.
- Pupils have a strong understanding of how to keep themselves safe, including when out and about and when online. Many also understand the importance of keeping healthy, for example by keeping out of direct sun at lunchtime. They enjoy the varied extra-curricular activities, including those that help to develop their health and fitness.
- Many pupils are passionate about the environment. They shared their strong understanding of what this means on a global and local level. They proudly explained how their wildlife pond, regenerated by a group of parents, is already providing for the natural world.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They work well individually and in groups and generally sustain their focus well in lessons. Pupils were adamant that the strong learning behaviours seen by inspectors were typical. A small group of pupils who have needed teachers' support to moderate their behaviours have made good progress with this.
- Attendance is good and remains in line with national averages. The persistent absence of a small group of pupils has reduced because of leaders' work with them and their families.
- Pupils' presentation of their work has improved over time and is now good overall.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Outcomes for pupils are good overall. The published national key stage 2 test results from 2018 showed that both the attainment and progress of pupils in reading, writing and mathematics aligned with those of other pupils nationally.
- The same published test results showed that the progress of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds was not as strong as that of other pupils nationally. However, their attainment was in line with national figures for this group of pupils.

- Those results also showed that, in writing and mathematics, a smaller proportion of the most able pupils attained the higher standards compared with most-able pupils nationally.
- Current pupils, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds, are now performing consistently well in reading, writing and mathematics. Their books show that they make strong progress over time and attain well.
- Current most-able pupils are attaining the higher standards overall but there remains some inconsistency in the level of challenge in writing and mathematics.
- Pupils who need support to catch up with their phonics and their handwriting skills make excellent progress because of the carefully targeted activities leaders design.
- Pupils with SEND make rapid progress from their starting points. They are supported exceptionally well by all staff who systematically plan activities that successfully address their personal and academic needs.

School details

Unique reference number	115999
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10088122

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	330
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Gail Radford
Headteacher	Jo Walker
Telephone number	01425 474 590
Website	www.poulnerjuniorschool.com
Email address	headteacher@poulner-jun.hants.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	10 – 11 January 2017

Information about this school

- Poulner Junior School is larger than the average primary school.
- The headteacher joined the school in April 2017. There have been many changes to the school staff since the previous inspection, including to the leadership team. The deputy headteacher, assistant headteacher and SENCo were all appointed following the previous inspection.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is also below the national average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited all classes in the school, most more than once, to observe learning, speak with pupils and look at their work. These visits were conducted jointly with school leaders.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, other senior and middle leaders, including the SENCo, and other staff. The lead inspector also met with governors, including the chair of the governing body, and representatives from the local authority. Inspectors also took account of the views of the 16 members of staff who responded to Ofsted's online staff survey.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils during lesson visits and during playtimes and lunchtimes. They met with a group of pupils formally and listened to some read during lessons. They also considered the 230 responses to the online Ofsted pupil questionnaire.
- Inspectors spoke to parents at the start of the first day of inspection. They also took account of the 185 responses to Parent View, along with the 51 written responses.
- The inspection team considered a wide range of documentation, including information available on the school's website and records relating to pupils' attainment, progress, attendance and behaviour. Information on governance, including minutes of governors' meetings and visits to school, was scrutinised. The school's self-evaluations and improvement plans were examined, along with records of the school's work to keep pupils safe.

Inspection team

Lucy English, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Yasmin Maskatiya	Her Majesty's Inspector
Doug Brawley	Ofsted Inspector

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