

Aldeburgh Primary School

Park Road, Aldeburgh, Suffolk, IP15 5EU

Inspection dates

9–10 October 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- National test results at the end of Year 2 have declined over the past three years. In 2012 they were lower than those found in most schools.
- Records of pupils' progress and previous work across all age groups show that they have not achieved as well as they should in recent years.
- This is because the checks teachers make on what pupils know and can do have not been used to build their knowledge, skills and understanding at a good enough rate.
- The quality of teaching is inconsistent and requires improvement. Teachers' questions do not always deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding.
- Teaching assistants are not always used well enough to support pupils' learning throughout lessons.
- Information from marking and the checks made on pupils' progress in lessons is not always used to adapt work to meet pupils' differing needs.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage do not have the opportunity to enjoy a rich range of activities that allow them to develop and explore their own ideas.
- The new leaders of English, mathematics and special educational needs are not yet fulfilling their roles effectively.
- Plans for members of the governing body to monitor the impact of targets in the school development plan are at an early stage.

The school has the following strengths

- Dynamic new leadership has secured an increasing amount of good teaching so that gaps in pupils' achievements are closing.
- Leaders have established a very clear view for the direction and development of the school. This is shared enthusiastically by staff, governors and parents.
- Young pupils use their excellent knowledge of the sounds letters well when reading.
- Pupils are kept safe. They behave well and talk enthusiastically about their learning.
- Parents have full confidence in the school. They are very pleased with the changes to their children's attitudes, and their 'buzz about learning'. One said, 'My son is really switched on to learning this term.'

Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited eight lessons, and four parts of lessons involving four teachers. Some lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Pupils' behaviour was observed in lessons, in the playground and during lunchtime.
- The inspector listened to pupils' views about the school, heard some of them read and looked at their current and past work.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior teacher, and representatives of the governing body and local authority.
- The inspector considered the responses from 19 parents and carers who completed the questionnaire on the Parent View website, and the 12 who spoke to the inspector as they brought their children to school. The results of the school's recent survey of parents' views were also scrutinised.
- Records of attendance, safeguarding arrangements, notes of the monitoring of the evaluation of teaching by the headteacher and performance management, the school's self-evaluation and the school improvement plan were analysed.

Inspection team

Kath Beck, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a very small school compared to others nationally.
- Almost all pupils come from White British backgrounds. Very few speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported through school action is much lower than in most schools, as is the proportion who are supported at school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is lower than the national average.
- Almost all the teaching staff are new. A number of temporary headteachers have supported the school over the past two years. The current permanent headteacher was appointed in February 2012, and took up her duties in June.
- Since the last inspection the pupil population has increased because the school now admits pupils in Years 5 and 6. Pupils will take national tests in Year 6 for the first time in 2013.
- The school has undergone building work to accommodate the higher number of pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By December 2013, raise the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better by making sure that teachers:
 - accurately assess what pupils know and can do
 - use information from marking and checks on pupils' progress during lessons to adapt work to meet their differing needs
 - develop their questioning skills so that they deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding
 - deploy teaching assistants effectively throughout lessons to support pupils' learning.
- Improve the provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, both indoors and outdoors, so that it:
 - gives children many opportunities to develop their own ideas and explore them in depth
 - includes rich, challenging learning activities that stimulate their curiosity and allow them to be independent and solve problems.
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
 - developing the skills of those newly appointed to leadership and management roles so that they contribute fully to the school's development, and are held to account for pupils' attainment and progress across the school
 - implementing fully the arrangements for governors to thoroughly monitor progress towards targets set out in the school's development plan.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Progress in lessons is inconsistent, in part because teachers do not always provide pupils with the information they need to fill some gaps in their knowledge and skills, or use assessments effectively enough to adapt activities to meet their precise needs.
- Practical activities in science, mathematics or taking on the role of a 'newshound' capture pupils' enthusiasm, especially that of boys, for new learning. Sometimes during these activities, staff miss good opportunities to ask open questions to deepen pupils' understanding.
- Children's progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage requires improvement. The learning environment, indoors and outdoors, has not been organised sufficiently to allow children to experience rich, challenging activities that stimulate their curiosity and encourage them to solve problems. Many activities are controlled too much by the teacher, so children do not have the opportunity to develop their own ideas and explore them over time.
- The decline in pupils' attainment has been halted because of improvements in the quality of teaching. Staff have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Current attainment in Year 2 is broadly in line with the national average. More-able pupils are challenged to reach higher levels of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Younger pupils make a good start in reading and writing because they apply their excellent knowledge of the sounds letters make confidently. The promotion of good-quality children's literature and the allocation of time to read in lessons are inspiring older pupils to make greater gains in their reading abilities.
- The number of pupils in Year 6 is very small. Demanding targets have been set for them to reach the levels expected for their age in English and mathematics by 2013. The headteacher and class teacher are working together to enable these pupils to make rapid progress and overcome previous underachievement.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, and those who speak English as an additional language, make similar progress to their friends as they are usually well supported during activities. This is not always the case at the beginning and end of lessons.
- The pupil premium is being used effectively to help small groups of pupils to work on specific programmes that are helping them to catch up and achieve in line with their classmates.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Parents' comments, monitoring records since the beginning of term and evidence from the inspection show that many aspects of teaching are now good, but this is not consistently the case. Typically in lessons that require improvement, teachers do not use their checks on pupils' progress to adapt work when it is too easy or too difficult. In some cases pupils are not challenged sufficiently to develop their thinking skills.
- Planning in the Early Years Foundation Stage does not take sufficient account of the requirements for children to work independently. Too often activities are decided by adults, limiting the opportunities for children to make decisions about their work or use their

imagination to the full.

- In good lessons, teachers are using the newly designed curriculum successfully to make learning enjoyable, raise pupils' aspirations and improve their personal development. They give pupils the confidence to 'have a go' and try out their own ideas. They also constantly check pupils' progress, and use the resulting information to build pupils' skills and knowledge systematically over time.
- Pupils who previously lacked interest have become highly motivated to learn through an innovative approach that promotes high-level skills across different subjects. They have become entrepreneurs, making a real television documentary about pollution in the area. They understand the importance of reading to carry out research, writing to persuade others to a different point of view, and information and communication technology to capture their views on camera.
- A new marking policy has been agreed and implemented. It gives pupils a good idea about what they have done and what they need to do to improve their work. The results are not always used effectively to influence lesson planning.
- Teaching assistants work in close partnership with teachers to enable pupils to complete their work successfully. Their usefulness during whole-class sessions is inconsistent. They are not always used to enable pupils who need extra support to participate when teachers introduce or summarise lessons.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils, parents, staff and governors all report that pupils' behaviour is typically good and that they are safe.
- School records show that there have been no racist, bullying or serious behavioural incidents. Relationships within the school are very positive and breaks between lessons are happy, social occasions.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught successfully how to play cooperatively. They are shown how to explain to a friend when they are acting in a way that upsets them, and ask them politely to stop.
- Practical and innovative approaches in lessons have altered the attitudes of many pupils. They talk enthusiastically about their learning, and want to do their best. A few pupils remain frustrated either by their lack of knowledge, or a desire to be given the answer rather than try out their own ideas.
- Pupils make important contributions to the development of the school. They were consulted about the new aims and values that include caring for one another. It was children who suggested and finally decided that the school's mission is 'to develop curious minds for a lifelong learning adventure.'
- Attendance is above average. Holidays in term time are not authorised unless there are exceptional circumstances.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- To ensure the school's capacity to improve is not only reliant on the headteacher, most staff have new leadership or management responsibilities for key subject areas or other aspects of the school. This is to ensure that they play a full part in its development, and are held accountable. They are not yet fully effective in these roles because they require training.
 - The school improvement plan is sharply focused on what is to be developed and achieved and by when. The governors are responsible for monitoring rigorously the school's progress towards different targets in the plan. Their arrangements for carrying this out are at an early stage of implementation.
 - High-quality leadership from the headteacher is bringing about rapid improvement. Since her initial appointment in February, she has worked closely with staff, the governing body and the local authority to evaluate fully the effectiveness of the school. Clear priorities to raise pupils' achievements quickly have been set. Detailed systems and programmes to support them are being implemented.
 - In order to unite parents and carers, staff, governors and pupils, the school consulted on, and launched in September 2012, a new 'Mission, Vision and Values' statement. This has created a shared view of the future of the school, and its aims, to which all are expected to adhere. Parents and carers value the high-quality communications between home and school, and especially the recent consultation about homework.
 - The headteacher was influential in appointing new staff to bring about a rise in the rate of pupils' progress. New performance management procedures have been established, and include a strong link between pupils' achievements and rises in staff salaries. Targets and regular review dates have been set. Recent robust, but supportive, monitoring has accurately identified the strengths on which staff can build and areas that require improvement.
 - Equality and diversity are at the heart of the school's values for respect, enjoyment, aspiration, cooperation and honesty. A subject review has placed greater emphasis on promoting faster progress in reading, writing and mathematics for all pupils through learning that is closely matched to their interests. The curriculum is enhancing pupils' personal, social and emotional development through the study of different faiths, cultures, their histories and life in a democratic and global society.
 - The local authority has provided considerable support to the school in recent years to improve the quality of pupils' learning, and has supported the governors in taking important decisions. It is currently providing the services of an advanced skills teacher to aid developments in the curriculum for children the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- **The governance of the school:**
- Governors, together with the local authority, have made testing decisions to improve the school's effectiveness. They have raised funds to enhance resources, and to alter the accommodation in the Early Years Foundation Stage so that children can move between the classroom and outdoor play area easily. They demonstrate the skills to challenge and support the school's leaders. Governors have ensured that pupils are kept safe and absence is followed up rigorously, and have arranged to make pupils and their parents and carers more aware of internet safety. They are aware of how well funding such as the pupil premium is used.
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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	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. 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.

School details

Unique reference number	124566
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	395586

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	89
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jane Hart
Headteacher	Debbie Gayler
Date of previous school inspection	12–13 January 2009
Telephone number	01728 452150
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