

Portobello Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108336
Local authority	Gateshead
Inspection number	377738
Inspection dates	14–15 March 2012
Lead inspector	David Shearsmith

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	203
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dorothy McGuinness
Headteacher	Jayne Lees
Date of previous school inspection	7 November 2008
School address	Tamerton Drive Birtley Chester le Street DH3 2LY
Telephone number	0191 4104571
Fax number	0191 4109146
Email address	portobelloprimaryschool@gateshead.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.

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 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 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 Street
Manchester M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



© Crown copyright 2012

Introduction

Inspection team

David Shearsmith
Janet Greaves

Additional inspector
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed eight teachers teaching 23 lessons and parts of lessons of which four were joint observations with the headteacher. Meetings were held with members of the governing body and the school staff. Inspectors took account of the responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. Inspectors observed the school's work, looked at pupils' books and a number of documents, including those relating to development planning, safeguarding and child protection. They also analysed 70 parental and carers' questionnaires and those completed by pupils and staff.

Information about the school

This school is smaller than the average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is average. The majority are of White British heritage and very few speak English as an additional language. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is average. The school has gained Forest School status, Gateshead Healthy Schools award and the Gateshead Sports award. The school has just started a breakfast club. The school meets the government floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for attainment and progress. Since the previous inspection a new headteacher and deputy headteacher have been in post from September 2011.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory and 4 is inadequate
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall Effectiveness	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	3

Key Findings

- Portobello Primary school is a satisfactory and rapidly improving school. Under the visionary leadership of the recently appointed headteacher, pupils enjoy their experiences in a safe, happy and nurturing environment. Parents and carers are very supportive of the school. It is not a good school because teaching is satisfactory and there are inconsistencies in pupils' achievement.
- Pupils' achievement is satisfactory but rapidly improving. From starting points which are typical for their age, they reach attainment which is broadly average in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6. An increasing proportion of pupils are now reaching higher attainment in some classes, representing rapidly improving progress. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make a good start, although they do not have sufficient access to outdoor learning. Progress accelerates in Year 2, and particularly in Year 6, as a result of well focused activities, high expectations and a brisk pace of learning.
- The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and improving swiftly, with an increasing proportion of good teaching, across the school. However, there is some variation across classes and subjects. Progress is sometimes limited by the lack of pace and challenge. In the best lessons, pupils make good progress due to the good use of assessment to meet pupils' needs.
- Pupils' behaviour is good and they have positive attitudes to their learning. They know what is acceptable and show respect towards everyone. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations, and are good at managing risk.
- The headteacher works very closely with the recently appointed deputy headteacher to raise standards and improve the school's overall effectiveness. These improvements are evident in the increasing effectiveness with which senior leaders monitor teaching and manage performance. There is also a clear understanding by all staff of what needs to be done and appropriate priorities have been set. Subject leaders, however, do not monitor and evaluate pupils' progress sufficiently in their subject areas.

Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and improve achievement so it is above the national average by 2013 by:
 - increasing the proportion of good teaching
 - quickening the pace of learning, so as to accelerate pupils' progress
 - making more consistent use of assessment information to increase pupils' progress
 - raising teachers' expectations so they challenge pupils to make better progress
 - ensuring there are more opportunities across the school for pupils to engage in extended writing
 - improving pupils' handwriting skills and presentation.
- Improve outdoor learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - ensuring children have constant access to a larger outdoor area throughout the day
 - improving the quality of child-initiated activities in the outdoor area.
- Improve the role of subject leaders by:
 - ensuring there is a greater focus on evaluating pupils' progress through lesson observations and the analysis of work in pupils' books in all subjects.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils' attainment in mathematics and English is broadly average as they make satisfactory but improving progress across the school. Children join the Reception class with skills that are typical for their age. They settle well because staff focus on developing children's personal skills and provide a range of stimulating activities to promote their basic skills. Provision outdoors, however, is limited, and does not promote child-initiated learning sufficiently.

Children still make good progress in Reception particularly in their basic skills because of the better provision indoors. The teaching of linking sounds and letters provides them with a good basis to transfer into Year 1. This continues in Years 1 and 2 and, consequently, pupils develop broadly average reading skills by the end of Key Stage 1. The school has developed a very positive approach to the teaching of reading across the school. This was very evident when listening to pupils read in Key Stage 1 as they were enthusiastic and able to link sounds to letters and words well. By the time pupils leave Key Stage 2, their attainment in reading is average and improving because the school provides interesting and stimulating reading materials such as child-friendly newspapers. Guided reading lessons across the school also focus on specific groups to ensure pupils make better progress.

Pupils make satisfactory but rapidly improving progress across the school as teaching improves. Pupils' weak handwriting skills and the lack of opportunities to write for extended periods in other subjects, however, slows their progress in English. They make better progress in mathematics, which is improving at a faster rate.

Pupils who are disabled and those with special educational needs are making satisfactory and improving progress through a well-structured programme of intervention strategies and group work. Pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress as they move through the school due to the good support they receive

The majority of parents and carers who expressed their views of the school feel that their children make good progress. Inspectors support the view that pupils are making at least satisfactory and sometimes good progress, particularly in Year 6.

Quality of teaching

The proportion of good teaching is increasing. In the majority of lessons, teaching is leading to better progress. In the best lessons, teachers have high expectations and engage pupils well through well matched interesting activities. Pupils are given rigorous time scales to complete work and teachers give feedback, which is effective in increasing pupils' progress. In a good mathematics lesson in Year 2, for example, pupils were encouraged to use positional language well through highly engaging practical activities and good use of technology, which enabled them to make good progress. Although marking and feedback of pupils' work has improved, some inconsistencies still remain. In satisfactory lessons, some teachers talk for too long and, as a result, the pace of learning slows. Although assessment systems are generally being used well they are not always used effectively to ensure consistent good progress across the school and to ensure that tasks always match pupils' needs.

The planned creative curriculum motivates pupils well. It now has a sharper focus on basic skills which enables pupils to make faster progress. This was observed in a literacy lesson in Year 6 where pupils were highly engaged in writing for a purpose. They made good progress due to highly focused activities, good pace and challenge. The curriculum enables pupils to be engaged and to apply their skills in other contexts. However, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to engage in writing in other subjects.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is developed well. Pupils are willing to work together and, during good lessons, they have opportunities to reflect on their learning and develop a better understanding of the world around them.

Almost all parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire considered that their children were well taught. Inspectors, however, found that teaching is satisfactory but improving rapidly.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils enjoy school and have good attitudes to learning. They are enthusiastic learners and benefit from a wide range of engaging opportunities provided by the school. They have a good understanding of right and wrong as well as a natural curiosity about the world around them and bring this to bear as they learn and play. Teamwork and collaborative working are encouraged throughout the school, which has helped pupils develop useful life skills. Pupils

work and play together well, showing consideration and support for each other. The school buddies provide good support in the playground and are skilful in supporting younger pupils in their play.

Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe and parents and carers feel that the school is safe and secure. Recent improvements in security have been appreciated by many parents and carers. They feel their children are well cared for and know that their well-being is a high priority. Parents and carers also believe that behaviour is generally good as the school has good systems in place to support behaviour. Behaviour was observed both in and out of lessons and inspectors also checked behaviour and racial incident logs, which confirmed that behaviour is consistently good. Behaviour is managed well by effective and consistently applied systems. Pupils say that there is no bullying as they all get on well with each other. If there are any problems they are resolved well. Pupils have a good understanding of different forms of bullying that they may come across and how to deal with these, for example, when using the internet and mobile phones.

Attendance is satisfactory and improving due to the school's drive to ensure all pupils attend well, through an effective range of positive strategies to promote attendance and punctuality.

Leadership and management

The headteacher provides the school with strong and effective leadership that is having a very positive impact on rapidly raising pupils' attainment. She is very ably assisted by a recently appointed deputy, working in partnership to raise standards. Subject leaders are increasingly supporting this drive for improvement although they have not always had opportunities to develop their leadership skills and focus on monitoring and evaluating progress. Since the headteacher's appointment, there has been a relentless focus on ensuring the accurate assessment of pupils' work, improving the quality of teaching and raising attainment. Rigorous monitoring of lessons is improving their quality and raising teachers' expectations. As a result pupils' progress is accelerating and attainment across the school is rising. All staff have had a significant amount of professional development and this, alongside rigorous performance management, is further securing improvements.

The governing body has more recently developed a greater understanding of the strengths and areas for development and is now in a good position to support and also challenge the school to do even better. It has supported the new leadership team in enabling the school to improve further by establishing governors to support key areas of the school's work. The school's capacity for sustained improvement is satisfactory. The school has rigorous systems to support improvement and although improvements are well underway they have not had sufficient time to have consistent impact.

The curriculum is creative and engages pupils so that they are keen to learn. The curriculum now has a clearer focus on progressively improving basic skills. Pupils say they enjoy the wide range of visits and visitors to the school because it makes their learning more interesting. The highly effective use of partnership working enhances those learning opportunities that develop pupils' imagination and experiences, for example. The curriculum provides many opportunities for pupils to enhance their spiritual, moral social and cultural development; for instance, during a culture week, parents, pupils and staff engaged in a range of activities to promote greater global understanding.

The school's work to promote equality of opportunity is good. Personalised programmes are devised effectively for pupils that need them. For example, programmes to support pupils' basic skills, including linking sounds to letters and mathematics interventions, are improving progress for low attainers rapidly.

Recent improvements to safeguarding and improvements to security promote safeguarding well and the school meets all statutory requirements.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



16 March 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Portobello Primary School, Chester le Street DH3 2LY

You may remember that we recently inspected your school, to see how well you are learning. Thank you for being so friendly and helpful. You go to a satisfactory school that is rapidly improving. It does a number of things well.

- You all enjoy going to school and learning new things.
- Teaching is satisfactory and much is beginning to be good.
- Most of you say that behaviour is good and that there are no incidents of bullying.
- You get good support with improving your learning when you have difficulties.
- The headteacher and staff take good care of you and are doing particularly well at improving the school.

Your teachers know that you can make even more progress and attain higher standards. Therefore, I have asked them to help you to make good or better progress in every class. I have asked them to increase the pace of lessons so that you are actively learning for more of the time. In addition, I have asked them to challenge you to work harder and have higher expectations of what you can achieve including improving your handwriting and presentation. Children in the Reception class need more time to learn in the outdoor area. I have asked subject leaders to be even more effective in looking at lessons and your books and planning to improve the school further.

You can help to play a part by working hard and always doing your best. I wish you the very best for your future at Portobello Primary School.

Yours sincerely

David Shearsmith
Lead inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', 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.