

Porters Grange Primary School and Nursery

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	132792
Local Authority	Southend-on-Sea
Inspection number	360437
Inspection dates	24–25 May 2011
Reporting inspector	Clementina Ogunsanwo

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	426
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Samantha Richardson
Headteacher	Ros Ferdinand
Date of previous school inspection	31 October 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors, who visited 25 lessons taught by 20 teachers. Inspectors spoke with staff, parents and carers, members of the governing body and groups of pupils. Inspectors looked at samples of pupils' work, the analysis of the tracking of pupils' progress, safeguarding procedures, attendance records, school policies and procedures, school leaders' and local authority monitoring records, notes of governing body meetings, school planning and risk assessments. They also analysed 50 questionnaires received from parents and carers and 95 received from staff and pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Is teaching sufficiently challenging and individualised to address the diverse needs of pupils and do pupils know what they need to do to improve their performance?
- What has been the impact of measures taken by school leaders and the governing body to eliminate inconsistencies in teaching and in raising pupil's achievement?
- What has been the impact of measures taken to improve attendance?

Information about the school

Porters Grange Primary School and Nursery is much larger than most primary schools. The number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is much higher than the national average. The number of pupils from minority ethnic background is very high, with the majority learning English as an additional language. The number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. Above average proportions of pupils join or leave the school partway through their primary education, although this mobility is reducing. The school has gained International School Award, the Basic Skills award, Activemark and Healthy School status.

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: how good is the school?**3****The school's capacity for sustained improvement****3**

Main findings

Porters Grange is a satisfactory school where pupils find their lessons interesting and have good relationships with each other and adults. Behaviour is good in the happy and caring environment. However, attendance remains low overall mainly due to the high mobility and erratic attendance of some pupils, often those who join the school partway through their education. The headteacher has strengthened the positive drive for improvement in the school with support from the senior leadership team and the committed staff. The quality of teaching and learning is improving. Strategies to improve progress have been selected carefully and are monitored to ensure they are effective. There are clear signs of success although this is uneven across the year groups. Safeguarding arrangements are good and all pupils understand how to be safe and healthy. Parents and carers are generally pleased with most aspects of the school. One said, 'My child has particular difficulties which the school tries its best to provide for.'

Although attainment in both key stages is low, pupils' achievement is satisfactory. From low starting points, they make satisfactory but improving progress. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those from minority ethnic communities make good progress. This is because their needs are quickly and accurately assessed and they receive a range of specialist support. For example, the active role of the teaching assistants is enabling them to acquire early reading skills.

Teaching is satisfactory and monitoring by senior staff is supporting improvement. Information on pupils' progress has improved, but is not used consistently to challenge and accelerate the learning of all groups, especially the most able. Marking and guidance, while satisfactory, is inconsistent and does not routinely identify how pupils can improve a piece of work. The lack of rigour in ensuring that pupils act on guidance when it is given sometimes inhibits their rate of progress. The curriculum has improved since the last inspection and is now good. Enrichment identifies subjects and themes that appeal to all pupils, especially boys, and this has led to improvements, particularly in writing.

The capable leadership of the headteacher and senior teachers has united staff who share the ambition to improve standards. Other leaders and managers are beginning to refine their skills but do not play a full part in monitoring and evaluating their areas of responsibility. The school is now demonstrating satisfactory capacity to improve. Leaders' close monitoring of lessons has enabled them to identify and tackle some of the key shortcomings that reduce the effectiveness of teaching. Issues from the previous inspection have been satisfactorily addressed and in particular the enriching curriculum is now making a better contribution to pupils' engagement and enjoyment of learning. Self evaluation is satisfactory. The headteacher and the leadership team have an accurate picture of those areas where improvements are needed. The governing body is supportive and improving their skills so they are better placed to challenge the school more incisively.

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Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged to be 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 accelerate pupils' learning by ensuring that:
 - work in all classes is challenging the different capabilities of the pupils, particularly the more able
 - pupils regularly receive and respond to guidance on what they need to do to improve their work
 - throughout the school, pupils are routinely involved in checking their own and each other's work against appropriately challenging success criteria
 - in the Early Years Foundation Stage, assessment information is used to plan indoor and outside activities that promote independence and learning.
- Improve attendance by:
 - developing further schemes to encourage and reward regular attendance and discourage parents and carers from taking their children out of school in term time
 - correlating attendance data against pupils' records of attainment
 - demonstrating to parents and carers the importance of regular attendance by publicising examples where pupils with good attendance achieve well.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Attainment has been consistently low at both key stages. Over time Year 2 and Year 6 assessments have shown pupils are the equivalent of around six months behind the national average. Boys have generally done less well than girls. Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals are in line with similar pupils in other schools, but others perform less well. Low attendance and high mobility contributes to the low attainment. Year 6 pupils are now making satisfactory progress particularly in their reading, writing and mathematics. Progress in lessons is slower when work is not closely matched to pupils' abilities but is improving as the quality of teaching improves. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those learning English as an additional language make good progress. The better match of activities to their needs ensure that these pupils learn at their own pace and make steady progress. Pupils with behavioural difficulties are more engaged in learning as a result of more effective behaviour management strategies. Behaviour has improved since the last inspection and is now a strength of the school. Pupils respond positively to the school's consistent expectations. They enjoy opportunities to take on responsibilities such as school councillors and play leaders and are happy to be part of the school community. They have a good awareness of the need for a healthy diet and regular exercise, although this is not always reflected in the contents of their lunchboxes. They feel safe at school and know how to keep safe, for example, they are aware of the dangers on the road and water. Aside from their roles within the school community, pupils' engagement with the community is limited to choir singing sessions and 'Turning Tides'.

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Although attendance remains low the figures are skewed by the impact of high mobility and the erratic attendance of some of those new to the school who are not yet responding to the school's procedures. However, for those who have been at the school for all or most of their primary years, attendance has improved. Pupils' enthusiastic participation in creative expression projects during Black History month indicate some of the ways in which the school celebrates the rich cultural diversity of its pupils. Furthermore, pupils are provided with opportunities to learn about different faiths in the United Kingdom and around the world.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Teachers know their pupils well and motivate them to become increasingly eager learners. Classrooms are managed well, so pupils know exactly what is expected in terms of work and behaviour. Relationships are positive, creating a positive learning atmosphere. Learning support staff are now better used to support pupils' learning when, previously, they focused on dealing with challenging behaviour. Effective teacher questioning involves all pupils, so they are all included in learning. Despite these improvements, the use of assessment information is not always consistent. Teachers track pupils' progress toward the achievement of set targets, but sometimes this information is not used to ensure that work is matched closely to pupils' abilities. Not all marking gives clear guidance on what is

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needed to improve performance. On occasions, when guidance is given, pupils do not always respond to the guidance to ensure improvements.

Sometimes pupils of different abilities all do the same or very similar work which does not allow them, particularly the more able, to maximise their progress. Learning objectives are not always clear, which results in some loss of focus. Teachers do not consistently refer to success criteria during the lesson to remind pupils of what they should be learning.

The curriculum is good. The introduction of cross-curricular themes brings subjects together, particularly through enjoyable practical tasks such as sculpture and design technology projects, and makes a major contribution to motivating and engaging pupils during lessons. The increased emphasis on developing pupils' acquisition of basic skills is beginning to lead to improvements in writing. Educational visits, such as trips to Colchester Zoo, provide purposeful curriculum enhancement opportunities. However, these improvements have not had enough impact on outcomes as attainment remains low.

Porters Grange works effectively to engage its many children with challenging circumstances in learning. Pastoral care is a key strength, as parents and carers confirm. Good targeted intervention is in place with the invaluable work of the 'Children Support Team' and other outside agencies making a difference in supporting and meeting the needs of the individual child. The consistent quality of care, guidance and support provided by staff ensures that pupils feel very safe and are supported in overcoming barriers to their learning. The school effectively supports its many children in potentially vulnerable circumstances. Those who join the school partway through their education are helped to settle quickly into the school's orderly routines. Transition arrangements are effective between Nursery to Reception and on to Year 1. The improved progress now being made by pupils in acquiring their key literacy and numeracy skills, and their more positive attitudes to learning, mean that pupils are satisfactorily prepared for the next stage of their education.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and leadership team have made concerted efforts to create a positive climate for learning and are beginning to secure improvements in teaching and learning that is accelerating pupils progress. The governing body too has played an active part in driving improvement and fulfills its legal responsibilities. Governors visit the school and report their findings to the school. Safeguarding requirements are met and child protection systems are closely monitored and regularly reviewed. They actively support the school in meeting the welfare requirements of the many pupils with complex needs. Close

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partnerships with external agencies enable the school to access specialist support to address individual needs. Equal opportunities are promoted and discrimination challenged through the school's arrangements for pupils' welfare, so that even those with troubled backgrounds are helped to access learning effectively. The school promotes and encourages harmony and respect which enhances the pupils' sense of belonging to the school community. Parent and carer comments confirm how closely the school works with them to support their children's education. Their views are taken into account and the school promptly responds to parents' identified concerns. Community cohesion is promoted well, with pupils learning to celebrate cultural diversity within the school and beyond. As a result, the school functions as a harmonious community where pupils from different backgrounds mix and get on well with each other.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children settle quickly in Reception because they are well cared for and happy. Positive relationships between adults and children make a strong contribution to children's personal and social development. This contributes to their engagement in learning and eagerness to participate in activities both indoors and outdoors. Children enjoy using the outdoor area, but it is not used to its full potential to extend all areas of learning. Teaching is satisfactory but crucial opportunities for learning are missed. All areas of learning are covered, but planning does not always maximise challenge, especially for the more able. There is an appropriate balance between self-chosen activities and adult initiated tasks. The indirect access to resources limits children's independent play opportunities. Children are eager to share their experience of trips, which are then built on in school. For example, a trip to a local farm has stimulated opportunities for writing and role play in the 'farm shop' which is contributing to children's developing basic skills for the future. From their starting points which are significantly below expectations, children make

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a satisfactory progress by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, although attainment remains below that expected for children's age. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The newly appointed Early Years Foundation Stage leader is aware of the priorities for improvement which are at the early stages of development. Good teamwork across the Early Years staff ensures that there is a consistency of planning to meet the needs of all the children except the more able.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

The majority of parents and carers express positive views about all aspects of the school, particularly the caring learning environment. A minority of parents and carers expressed concerns about their children's level of progress, quality of teaching and the school's response to their suggestions. Inspectors took all views into account in coming to their conclusions.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Porters Grange Primary School and Nursery to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 50 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 426 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	25	51	24	49	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	23	47	24	49	1	2	1	2
My school informs me about my child's progress	23	47	19	39	6	12	1	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	14	29	31	63	4	8	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	20	41	24	49	5	10	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	18	37	24	49	5	10	1	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	18	37	23	47	4	8	4	8
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	13	27	30	61	4	8	1	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	13	27	30	61	3	6	2	4
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	13	27	28	57	4	8	3	6
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	11	22	29	59	5	10	2	4
The school is led and managed effectively	15	31	28	57	3	6	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	19	39	24	49	5	10	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 December 2010 and 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.

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

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on 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 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:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

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.



26 May 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Porters Grange Primary School and Nursery Southend-on-Sea SS1 2NS

Thank you for making us so welcome on our visit. Porters Grange is a satisfactory school that has improved over the past couple of years, especially in the interesting things you learn about. You behave well and get on together, which makes your school such a happy place. Staff take good care of you. They help those of you who came new to the school to settle in quickly. Children in Nursery and Reception are learning but we would like to see them do better. We have asked the school to see how activities are organized so that you get the most from your time there. We have also asked staff to make sure indoor and outdoor activities in Nursery and Reception help you to learn and play well.

Over the past year the school has helped you to become better readers. We could see improvements in other work too, especially in your writing. Well done! We have asked the school to help you do your best by making sure that your work is not too easy or too hard. Most of you put up your hands to answer your teachers' questions and teachers usually ask you to show with your thumbs whether you have understood. We would like them always to make a note of anything you are unsure about and give you extra help next lesson.

You cannot learn if you are not in school to benefit from all that goes on. We have asked the school to show your parents and carers how important it is to come to school every day. Well done to the increasing number of you who already come every day and win your attendance certificates.

Thank you again for being so polite and courteous and our best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Clementina Ogunsanwo

Lead inspector

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