

Portway Infant School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	115857
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	379153
Inspection dates	3–4 July 2012
Lead inspector	Margaret Dickinson HMI

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	268
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Mary Dobson
Headteacher	Miss Sara Allen
Date of previous school inspection	10 November 2006
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Age group	4–7
Inspection date(s)	3–4 July 2012
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Introduction

Inspection team

Margaret Dickinson

Her Majesty's Inspector

Phillip Minns

Additional Inspector

Linda Rafferty

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspection team observed teaching and learning in 14 lessons taught by 10 teachers. In nine of these, the inspectors stayed for the whole lesson, or session. Four lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher or deputy headteacher. The inspectors held meetings with staff, pupils and the Chair of the Governing Body. The team took account of the responses to the on-line Parent View survey in planning the inspection. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including: the school's evaluation of its effectiveness and improvement plan; safeguarding, attendance and behaviour records; surveys and records of visits carried out by the governing body; and leaders' monitoring of teaching. The inspectors analysed 92 questionnaires returned by parents and carers and 25 questionnaires from staff.

Information about the school

Portway Infant School is an average-sized primary school. Most pupils are of White British heritage. A few speak English as an additional language. Around 9% come from service families associated with the military base in the locality. The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus is broadly average. No pupil has a statement of special educational needs.

Since its previous inspection, the school had an interim assessment in July 2010. Ofsted judged that the school's performance had been sustained and a full inspection was deferred.

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	1
Achievement of pupils	1
Quality of teaching	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	1

Key findings

- Portway Infant School is outstanding. It is a happy, caring environment in which to work and learn, where pupils thrive in both their academic progress and personal development. The school is held in extremely high regard by parents and carers. Inspectors fully endorse their views.
- Attainment is consistently high, particularly in reading and writing. Pupils make outstanding progress, building on their very good start in Reception. Attainment in mathematics is above average and improving strongly. Achievement is good for all groups of pupils apart from the lower-ability pupils in Year 1 whose progress is satisfactory.
- Pupils benefit from teaching that is outstanding over time. Leaders have set high expectations for the quality of teaching and ensured that there is a consistent approach to how lessons are planned and learning promoted. This is very noticeable in writing sessions, where teaching is highly effective.
- Behaviour is outstanding. Pupils show by their demeanour that they feel happy and settled in school. In lessons, they work hard, talk readily about their learning and recognise each other's successes. Pupils say they cannot imagine anyone would not feel safe and supported in school.
- Leadership and management are outstanding. There is a constant, and shared, drive to improve further. The curriculum provides pupils with rich and varied experiences which they clearly relish. The school is highly successful in promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Teachers' performance is managed effectively. Training and coaching are focused on the school's priorities; the successful work to improve pupils' writing is a good example. Although good practice exists, some leaders' monitoring does not always evaluate the impact of the teaching on pupils' actual learning.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Embed and apply to mathematics the successful strategies that have raised attainment in reading and writing, to secure consistently high attainment by Year 2 pupils and good achievement for the lower-ability pupils in Year 1.

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- Ensure that all monitoring by leaders focuses on and evaluates how successfully different groups of pupils are learning.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Historically, children have entered the Reception year with skills and understanding expected for their age. However, more recently, children's communication, language and number skills have been weaker on starting school. Children make particularly good progress in developing these basic skills through carefully planned and focused teaching. Children are highly aware that they are 'learning' and use this word naturally when talking about what they are doing. One child said, for example, 'I need to learn to read to be able to do it well as an adult.' Children thrive in Reception and make a very good start to their education.

In Years 1 and 2, all groups of pupils continue to build very successfully on their early learning. This includes disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and pupils whose circumstances make them more vulnerable. Pupils achieve very well in reading and clearly enjoy reading and browsing books. They have a deep understanding of what good writing looks like and, through well-structured support, produce high-quality work. Pupils' knowledge of letters and sounds (phonics) is part of their success in reading and writing. Pupils are confident to have a go when tackling words they find more difficult. In mathematics, pupils have a secure knowledge of strategies when calculating. Pupils are keen to share the strategies they have used to work out possible answers and hands shoot up when they are given this opportunity. Achievement in mathematics has improved significantly and attainment is now well on the way to matching reading and writing. For the less-able pupils in Year 1, progress is satisfactory rather than good.

Pupils' performance in the national assessments at Year 2 has been significantly above average for five years, most notably in reading and writing. Performance in mathematics has not been quite as high but, this year, the school's unvalidated results show a marked increase. The school has focused effectively on improving boys' performance and has tackled this successfully, narrowing the gap between boys' and girls' attainment. Inspection evidence shows that the school is successfully sustaining pupils' high standards. Parents and carers are right to be so pleased with their children's achievement.

Quality of teaching

Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is planned extremely well to support children's individual needs. Every opportunity is used during the day to promote children's learning and development. For example, while children were eating their fruit, they were reminded of what they had been learning about the number 10 and how it could be divided up into smaller numbers. This was demonstrated visually,

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encouraging children to interact and talk about what they noticed. Teachers provide a highly effective learning environment. Resources and activities enthuse children. In a reading session, a good mixture of fiction and non-fiction texts encouraged children's talk, particularly that of boys. Children develop excellent levels of independence in Reception, making them very well prepared for Key Stage 1.

In Key Stage 1, lessons are very well planned and clearly structured. Learning for all groups is at least good, and often better. This includes disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. Pupils' books show that teachers have consistently high expectations of pupils, especially in writing. In mathematics, this is also the case, but more so for average and above-average pupils in the case of Year 1. Reading receives plenty of emphasis and is an important part of the pupils' day. This promotes excellent attitudes to reading for both girls and boys. Pupils have a wide range of opportunities to use their literacy and numeracy skills through different topics and subjects.

Teachers are highly skilled in using interesting and creative starting points to capture pupils' interest and curiosity. Pupils in Year 1 have very much enjoyed their topic on the Titanic, which has provided some valuable and memorable learning opportunities and prompted very effective writing. Pupils were immensely excited about their forthcoming trip to the Titanic Museum in Southampton. In a Year 2 mathematics lesson, real cupcakes were used to find out how these could be arranged in different ways for a baking tin. When pupils moved to their independent work, they worked very hard to find as many ways as possible, sharing their ideas as they went. All pupils were engrossed in their learning.

Parents and carers are extremely happy with the quality of the teaching and inspectors agree. Many lessons observed during the inspection had a very clear thread of learning from start to finish. The criteria for successful learning are consistently shared with pupils to help them achieve good outcomes. Pupils refer naturally to these criteria when talking about their learning and marking is very closely linked to them, particularly in writing. Learning support assistants are very clear about their role and focus in lessons. They provide excellent support for the groups of pupils to which they are allocated during independent work and engage effectively with pupils during whole-class sessions.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

All parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire confirmed that pupils' behaviour is good. Inspectors agree and judge behaviour to be outstanding overall. Scrutiny of behavioural records and discussions show that behaviour is excellent over time too. Staff follow the school's policy for managing behaviour consistently and pupils are clear what is expected of them. This also applies in Reception, where children are very aware of the different approaches to rewarding good behaviour. One child was delighted to receive 'butterfly points' which she explained gave her ten minutes of 'special beautiful time'.

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Pupils told inspectors that everyone knows to tell a teacher if there are any difficulties. Pupils are completely confident that if anyone becomes upset, through teasing or bullying for example, it will be sorted out. They assured inspectors this does not happen very often.

Pupils show good levels of independence, work and play together very happily and form very positive relationships. Pupils make an excellent contribution to their own learning. In all lessons, they aspire to do their best, are proud of their efforts and recognise other pupils' achievements, sometimes with spontaneous applause. They are particularly proud about hitting their targets and like the fact that this is celebrated in assemblies. Pupils' attendance has improved from low to above average because the headteacher and staff have taken effective steps to encourage regular attendance where this has been an issue.

Leadership and management

Parents and carers are rightly delighted with the quality of education provided for their children and many added positive comments on questionnaires. The headteacher leads by example and sets a high standard. Teamwork is strong, underpinned by a shared vision that each pupil will achieve well. There has been a sharp and successful focus on areas that have been relatively weaker. For example, the gap between boys' and girls' performance has narrowed significantly and is now less than that nationally. Over recent years a number of effective strategies to improve pupils' writing, particularly boys', has raised attainment. These demonstrate the school's successful work in ensuring all pupils are treated equally so they can achieve their potential. Outcomes in mathematics have shown marked improvement and work in pupils' books indicates these higher standards are likely to be sustained. The rich and varied curriculum promotes learning far beyond the basic skills, providing pupils with memorable experiences and providing an excellent foundation for their junior education. Clear attention is given to developing pupils' personal development alongside their academic achievement. This means pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is exceptionally well promoted. Pupils' safety and happiness are also at the forefront of everyone's mind. Members of the governing body ensure a focus on pupils' views through conducting regular surveys and visiting the school to find out for themselves what happens in the classroom. The safety and welfare of pupils receive careful attention and the school goes beyond the requirements for safeguarding pupils through exceptionally well-kept records.

Leadership has focused effectively on the quality of teaching. Targeted coaching and mentoring, where necessary, have maintained the high standard in teaching and ensured a common approach to how pupils are taught. There is marked consistency in, for example, how classrooms are organised, lessons planned, displays used and pupils' books marked. This indicates the clarity of direction from the senior leaders. Subject managers have provided well-targeted training to promote consistency in the teaching of writing and mathematics. Teaching and pupils' progress are monitored systematically. There is rigorous attention to how well individual pupils make

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progress, meaning there is little risk that a pupil could underachieve. The achievement of different groups, such as boys, girls and those who have special educational needs, is also monitored well. However, when lessons are observed, more attention is generally given to evaluating the teaching rather than the quality of learning.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	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 to 31 December 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.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
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.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
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.



5 July 2012

Dear Children

Inspection of Portway Infant School, Andover SP10 3PE

Thank you very much for making us so welcome when we visited recently. We really enjoyed coming to your school and talking to you about all the things that you do. We saw the Year 1 children bursting with excitement just before leaving for their trip to the Titanic Museum. We hope they had a good time.

We found that your school is outstanding. The headteacher and staff work hard to plan many interesting and exciting things for you. They make sure that you learn a lot in all your lessons so that you become really good readers, writers and mathematicians. They do this very well indeed and the teaching is outstanding. We could see how much the Year 2 children were looking forward to going to the junior school. All the things they have learned and experienced at your school mean they are confident about moving on, which is good.

We found that your school is very happy and friendly. You all get along well and told us that you can always talk to a teacher if you have any problems. In your lessons, you work hard, share ideas and help one another. You certainly know that you are in school to learn and that it is important to do your best. We hope that you continue to do this so that you get the very best out of your time at school.

You make outstanding progress in reading and writing. We saw some excellent writing and enjoyed reading your work. We have asked the headteacher and teachers to make sure that some of the pupils in Year 1 learn more in mathematics lessons. When the headteacher, deputy headteacher or other teachers visit your lessons, we have asked them to keep a careful eye on how all of you are learning. In this way, they can spot things that could perhaps be made even better.

Yours sincerely

Margaret Dickinson
Her Majesty's Inspector

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