

Portchester Community School

White Hart Lane, Portchester, Fareham, PO16 9BD

Inspection dates 15– 16 January 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	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

- Students' achievement is not yet good. It varies too much between subjects and boys do not achieve as well as they should.
- Too few students have made the progress of which they are capable in English by the end of Year 11.
- Teaching is not yet resulting in consistently good progress for all groups of students.
- Recent initiatives to improve teaching have not yet had enough impact on students' achievement.
- Checks by middle leaders on how well school policies and plans are put into practice in classrooms are not yet rigorous enough to lead to consistently good teaching.

The school has the following strengths

- Teaching is improving. Leaders and managers are now well focused on raising achievement and training for staff is linked to the school's priorities. Governors are effective in supporting and challenging the school.
- The school is a welcoming community, which encourages all students to respect others and behave well.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs are cared for well and make good progress.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good so that they are prepared well to be considerate citizens.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 32 lessons, of which four were jointly observed with a member of the school’s leadership team. Inspectors visited other learning activities and scrutinised samples of students’ work.
- Inspectors observed the provision and support provided for students who have physical disabilities, and examined records showing their progress and development.
- Inspectors held meetings with three groups of students, school senior leaders, middle managers, two members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- A variety of school documentation was examined, including the school’s own information about the progress of current students, the school’s self-evaluation and development plans, behaviour and attendance logs, records relating to safeguarding, and records relating to the management of staff performance.
- Inspectors looked at records showing the development of students’ reading and heard the reading of a number of students who had received additional support in literacy.
- Inspectors took account of a questionnaire completed by 37 staff, together with 33 responses submitted by parents and carers to the online questionnaire Parent View.

Inspection team

Sean Thornton, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Jennifer Bray	Additional Inspector
Lynne Kauffman	Additional Inspector
Mark Shenton	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- Almost all students are White British. The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is low.
- The school serves the town of Portchester and its surrounding areas.
- The proportion of students who are eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care, students from service families and those known to be eligible for free school meals, is average but increasing.
- The proportions of students supported at school action and at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs are well above the national average.
- The school has resourced provision for disabled students and those who have special educational needs that specialises in supporting students with physical disabilities.
- A small number of students in Years 10 and 11 attend Fareham College for some of their courses.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better by:
 - ensuring that the features of good teaching present in the school relating to pace, challenge and regular developmental feedback are implemented fully and effectively by all teaching staff
 - developing the strategies that have been introduced to improve literacy so that they are consistently applied across the school.
- Improve student achievement overall by:
 - paying particular attention to standards in English for all students
 - accelerating the progress made by boys
 - ensuring that students make equally good progress in all subjects.
- Increase the capacity and effectiveness of middle managers to bring about improvement by:
 - improving the way they check on the quality of planning, teaching and learning.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Students join the school with below-average levels of attainment. By the end of Year 11, the proportion of students gaining five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C including English and mathematics remains below average.
- Students' attainment and progress are not consistent. The attainment of boys is much lower than that of girls in several subjects, including English. Also, attainment across subjects is too uneven.
- In English, students' progress is below average while their good progress in mathematics has resulted in levels of attainment in mathematics that are now average.
- Many students join the school with low reading ages and standards of literacy are low. The school has recognised that improvement in this area is the key to whole-school improvement and has made it the major priority. A range of targeted strategies has been introduced to improve the reading of many of the school's students and these students are now beginning to catch up with their peers.
- Attainment at the end of Year 11 is now improving, including the proportion of students gaining five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C including English and mathematics.
- The progress of disabled students and those who have special educational needs including those on the specialist resource base is good. Detailed record keeping is focused on their needs and supports their achievement.
- The pupil premium funding is well targeted and is beginning to have an impact. The difference in average point scores between the students who are eligible for free school meals and those who are not is less than that expected nationally. Moreover, the gap is reducing, attendance is improving and the number of students not in education, employment or training when they leave is decreasing. The pupil premium has been used to appoint staff in the Well-being Centre, to increase the staffing in English, to boost literacy and to enable eligible students to attend residential experiences that support their learning.
- The school's attention to equality of opportunity is evident in the increasing effort they are making to support every student and to help all to achieve their potential. The school's policy of early entry in mathematics has not prevented early-entry students from gaining the highest grades of which they are capable.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching is not of consistent good quality across the school. There is too much variation in the quality of teaching between and within subjects. There are examples of good and outstanding practice, but this has not been shared effectively so that all students are not enabled to make good progress.
- In some lessons teachers do not provide activities that are suitable for all students whatever their abilities, while in others the pace of the lesson is too slow. Some teachers do not use deep questioning enough to check students' progress and in some lessons students are not given enough time to work in groups, discussing their work and deepening their understanding.
- The marking of students' work varies significantly in quality. Some provides thoughtful commentary and indicates clear areas for improvement, but there are also examples of students' written work that is rarely marked.
- Some good and outstanding teaching was seen in both key stages. In these lessons students responded well to a diverse range of well-chosen activities. For example, a music lesson in Year 10 enabled students to develop their skills in composition by combining thoughtful appreciation

of a piece of classical music with a well-managed discussion of chords and chord sequences before leading the students into well-targeted paired work.

- The school's increased focus on the quality of teaching and its impact on learning is becoming established. Mechanisms for sharing good practice are developing, and the school's leaders are taking steps to tackle weak teaching.
- Most disabled students and those with special educational needs thrive as a result of good teaching, characterised by appropriate teaching approaches, a supportive classroom atmosphere, effective partnerships between teachers and teaching assistants and some good quality teaching and support in the specialist resource base.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Students' behaviour is typically good in lessons and around the school. In most lessons students concentrate well, showing positive attitudes and a desire to learn. Disruption in lessons is uncommon and is dealt with effectively.
- The school's emphasis on respecting the rights and responsibilities of all members of the community has been recognised by UNICEF, which has designated the school a Rights Respecting School.
- Students with physical disabilities are treated with courtesy and care by all students as well as by all members of the school's staff; this ensures their safety.
- Attendance is average. The rate of fixed-term exclusions for students at the school action stage is above average. The school believes that it should deal firmly with challenges to its authority and the evidence provided for inspectors suggests that this approach has been effective in reducing further misbehaviour.
- Students feel safe in school and have a good awareness of how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations, including when using modern technology. They report that incidents of bullying are rare and are dealt with promptly.
- The school's fully staffed Well-being Centre provides support for students and contributes to their attendance and behaviour.
- Staff, parents and carers agree that behaviour is usually good, that students feel safe and that teachers follow the school's behaviour policy.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- There have been several recent changes of roles and personnel within the school's leadership team and these changes have resulted in much improved systems for tracking students' progress, assessing the quality of teaching and organising interventions. However, many of these initiatives have not yet had enough time to have had a strong impact on school improvement.
- Past staffing issues in the English department contributed to students' slow progress in English, but the school's leaders responded well to these problems, which they believe have now been resolved.
- Checks on how well school policies and plans are put into practice in classrooms are not yet rigorous enough. The school has clarified the roles of the school's middle leaders and organised a programme of training in monitoring and evaluation, vital parts of school improvement. The impact of these measures is now becoming evident in improving student progress in several subjects.
- The management and leadership of the school's resourced unit are good, showing effective

teamwork between three team leaders including the special educational needs disability coordinator who has experience in a special school.

- The school's self-evaluation summary is concise and well written but requires more accuracy and precision in analysing achievement. The self-evaluation closely informs the school's improvement plan and ensures that students are not discriminated against.
 - Training for staff is well focused on the school's priorities; it recognises individual staff needs and is leading to better teaching. Staff benefit from working with colleagues. For example, in addressing the need to raise standards of literacy they have benefited from the skills of their colleagues in primary schools.
 - The school's curriculum is good, providing well for the needs and interests of its students. The three-year Key Stage 4 enables the school to provide a wider range of courses and leads to a more effective use of Year 9. A whole-school drive to improve students' literacy now includes all subject areas. The progress and safety of the small number of Key Stage 4 students who attend Fareham College are closely monitored.
 - Students' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is good, and is a strength of the school. A whole-school audit has been carried out and all subjects contribute to these important areas in addition to well-planned assemblies and effective cooperation between teachers of religious education and citizenship. Partnerships with schools in other areas, including Birmingham and South Africa, develop students' awareness of other cultures and the subjects of music, drama and dance enable all students to appreciate these cultural forms.
 - The school works hard to raise the aspirations not only of its students but also of their families, and dedicated staff are employed to ensure contacts with all families. The school promotes all aspects of equality strongly.
 - The system of performance management is effective and has been updated to respond to government changes. Salary progression is taken very seriously and occurs only when merited by sustained good performance.
 - All aspects of safeguarding are fully met. Staff and governors take their responsibility to keep students safe very seriously.
 - The local authority works closely with the school and has an accurate picture of its strengths and weaknesses. Representatives have supported the school by carrying out reviews, advising on staffing issues and developing the skills of senior and middle leaders.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have benefited from regular training. They monitor many aspects of the school's work closely and ask challenging questions of school leaders. Governors understand the strengths and weaknesses of the school: for example, they can describe the path of improvement in mathematics and explain that progress in English is still disappointing. They make visits to the school, join lessons and realise what makes teaching good. Governors manage the school finances well, for example by ensuring that the pupil premium is targeted and used effectively. A group of governors manages the headteacher's own performance management review efficiently, with the assistance of a local authority adviser. Governors are fully involved in the performance management system for other staff; all promotions, with their financial consequences, are discussed in a governor committee.
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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	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	116418
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	405646

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11– 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	759
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Hilary Small
Headteacher	Roger Matthews
Date of previous school inspection	24– 25 May 2011
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