

Porters Grange Primary School and Nursery

Lancaster Gardens, Southend-on-Sea, SS1 2NS

Inspection dates

9–10 May 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		Requires improvement	3
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

- Although improving, attainment is below national levels in both key stages.
- Progress rates are not yet consistently good across Key Stages 1 and 2.
- Progress is slightly better in mathematics than in English, including for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- The amount of good teaching is rising but, in a few lessons, pace and challenge are insufficient and work is not closely enough matched to ability.
- Teachers and learning support assistants have too few opportunities to share their strongest skills with colleagues.
- Pupils' work is regularly marked but not all marking is linked to targets or shows pupils how to improve their work.
- Behaviour has improved but attendance rates remain low.
- The headteacher and governors are effectively implementing plans to improve teaching and achievement but these improvements are at an early stage, including in more effective analysis and use of data to ensure good progress.
- The school has not yet been able to fully implement the planned restructuring of the senior leadership team to ensure responsibilities are shared.
- Many subject leaders are new and are still developing their roles.
- Governors offer increased support and challenge to the school but recognise the need for further training in the analysis and use of data to ensure improvement is as rapid as possible.

The school has the following strengths

- The school provides well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils are very supportive of their school and its recent improvements.
- The new headteacher has accurately identified those areas requiring improvement and acted swiftly to address them.
- Pupils feel safe in school, and parents and carers agree.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team visited 23 lessons taught by 16 staff.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, governors, staff, representatives from the local authority and groups of pupils.
- There were too few responses to generate a summary of views on the online Parent View questionnaire. Inspectors spoke to parents and carers in the playground and took account of the school's own recent (December 2012) survey of parents and carers in carrying out the inspection. They also analysed the 14 staff questionnaire responses.
- Inspectors observed the school's work. They also looked at the school's improvement plan, data on pupils' attainment and progress, monitoring and self-evaluation procedures, a range of policies and the arrangements for safeguarding pupils.

Inspection team

Michael Sutherland-Harper, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Jacqueline Pentlow	Additional Inspector
Jackie Jackson-Smith	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- White British and any other white background are the largest of a number of ethnic groups.
- Some pupils join the school partway through their primary education.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above the national average, as is the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium is well above average. This is additional government funding for children in the care of the local authority, children known to be eligible for free school meals and children with a parent in the armed forces.
- The school provides a breakfast club and the Smart Moves club, specifically targeted at pupils who are disabled and who have special educational needs.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The headteacher has been in post since September 2012. There have been significant staff changes in the last 12 months.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of all teaching to good or better by:
 - matching work to ability more closely in all lessons
 - increasing the pace and challenge in lessons to a consistently high level
 - identifying and sharing of what teaching and support staff do best in classes
 - ensuring that all marking is linked to targets, shows pupils how to improve their work at all times and that they follow up suggestions for improvement.
- Raise achievement across the school by:
 - analysing and using data more effectively to quickly identify underachievement and ensure faster progress
 - making sure that attendance rates continue to rise.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management at all levels by:
 - implementing the planned restructuring of the senior leadership team to ensure that responsibilities are more distributed
 - developing the roles of subject leaders in planning for improvement and driving it forward
 - providing further training for governors in the use and analysis of data so that they can more closely monitor pupils' rates of progress.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- The school has improved its systems for tracking progress rates and ensuring equal opportunities for all pupils. Leaders have recognised the need to refine how they analyse and use data across the school to more quickly identify any underachievement and ensure that progress rates continue to rise.
- A recent local authority review has confirmed that historical data on attainment and progress was not fully accurate. Pupils' attainment in the last three years has been significantly below national in all skills.
- Attainment and rates of progress remain below national but are rising in Key Stages 1 and 2 in reading and mathematics as a result of improved resources and interventions, including setting in mathematics in Key Stage 2 and support from local authority advisers. They are also rising in writing in both key stages, but more slowly. Current data show that results for this year for the end of Key Stage 2 are expected to be close to those achieved nationally.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make similar, and sometimes better, progress than others. Interventions, including a well-attended breakfast club and the Smart Moves club, are more timely, have grown in number and range and are delivered by increasingly well-trained staff.
- Pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium make similar progress to their peers in mathematics and slightly less in English. They are one term behind in mathematics and a year behind in English but the gap is narrowing.
- The older pupils are capable readers. They develop good ability in working out complicated words and have increasing skills in comprehension. The home-school reading programme is well supported by parents and carers. Resources to encourage reading are expanding, especially in Key Stage 2.
- Pupils develop their skills in linking sounds and letters (phonics) in Key Stage 1 but further work is under way, including a re-take for some Year 2 pupils, to consolidate these skills for any children who may not yet be reaching the desired levels.
- Children start in the Early Years Foundation Stage with knowledge and skills well below those expected for their age. They make good progress in the Nursery because their needs are quickly and accurately identified.
- Progress rates continue to rise, especially in personal and social skills, as children move through the Reception class because systems for tracking and monitoring their development are increasingly refined. Progress in communication and language is improving but at a slower rate. Children leave the Early Years Foundation Stage working below nationally expected levels.
- Staff work effectively in the Early Years Foundation Stage and throughout the school to ensure that all children are helped to quickly settle into the school's orderly routines, including those joining at various other times.

The quality of teaching**requires improvement**

- The proportion of good teaching has increased but is not yet high enough to enable all pupils to make good progress across the school. No inadequate teaching was observed during the inspection. Despite significant staff turnover in the past 12 months, the quality of teaching is rising.
- In some lessons, teachers talk for too long so that the pace and challenge slows. In these lessons, expectations are not always high enough. Lessons are carefully planned but pupils are sometimes set similar work to do regardless of ability. Pupils are not given enough opportunities to work independently.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge. They use questions and resources, including information and communication technology, well to create an increasingly stimulating learning environment. However, sharing of their most effective classroom strategies between teachers and between learning support assistants is at an early stage, in part due to the high staff turnover in the last year. The school is putting plans in place to develop more sharing of best strategies.
- Presentation of pupils' work is improving but is still variable. Work is regularly marked and most pupils know their targets. However, marking is at present inconsistent in showing pupils how to reach the next levels and teachers do not always ensure that pupils act upon the advice given.
- In a particularly effective Year 2 literacy lesson on making a play, the teacher first created a sense of what it was like to be in a play, broke down the task into manageable portions so pupils had a sense of achievement at all stages and then used the results to group pupils by ability. Such small-group work is helping to improve literacy across the school. Organising pupils into ability sets in mathematics in Key Stage 2 is having a similar effect for numeracy.
- Learning support assistants work closely with teachers and pupils to support disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. Their encouraging approach, together with carefully considered tasks, means that all groups are effectively integrated within the classroom.
- Reading skills are taught effectively. The majority of parents and carers feel that the system for reading has improved. Systems for developing the ability to match sounds to letters have improved and the range of resources to encourage reading is growing.

The behaviour and safety of pupils**requires improvement**

- Although pupils' behaviour is mostly good, behaviour and safety require improvement because attendance is too low. Attendance is improving slowly but has been below the national average for some time, which has contributed to low achievement for some pupils in the past. Attendance is still low. The school has put procedures in place for monitoring and supporting pupils and families with attendance issues, including a booklet on how to ensure good attendance. As a result, persistent absence has dropped dramatically. Pupils are punctual to school and to lessons.
- Exclusions have dropped significantly and are now average. A pastoral support programme has been put in place for anyone excluded more than once. The small number of racist incidents are appropriately logged and quickly followed up.

- Expectations of good behaviour are a high priority in lessons and around the school. The school is implementing a range of policies and procedures successfully as part of its close analysis of behaviour to ensure consistent expectations across the school.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They mostly behave well in and out of lessons. The high priority that they place on good behaviour was demonstrated by pupils who responded to an inspector in interviews by saying that they would recommend the school to anyone 'as long as they were well behaved'.
- Pupils feel safe in school and parents and carers agree. Pupils are fully aware of the need for internet safety and know how to ensure it. The school site is secure and the budget includes plans to ensure regular review of site safety. Pupils say that any concerns they may have about behaviour or safety will be quickly dealt with by the school and that there is always an adult to whom they can turn if they have any sort of difficulty.
- Pupils are aware of all types of bullying, which have been discussed in lessons and assemblies. They know how to deal with these situations by reporting them to an adult.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- The recently appointed headteacher has acted swiftly and with determination to move the school forward. The school improvement plan and school self-evaluation accurately identify those areas requiring further development, including teaching and achievement. Teaching has improved and attainment is now rising but the school recognises that there is still much to do.
- Staff are supportive of the drive for improvement. The headteacher has planned a restructuring of the senior leadership team to ensure that responsibilities are distributed, but this restructuring is not yet complete. As a result, at the moment, too many responsibilities fall on the headteacher's own shoulders.
- The roles of subject leaders, many of whom are recently appointed, are at an early stage of development. Subject leaders are now providing stronger leadership of teaching. They are passionate about making improvements to planning and monitoring within their areas of responsibility, as reflected in the rising progress rates in English and mathematics, and they are working together.
- Staff are held accountable for results and progress in their classes. They recognise that movement up the pay scales depends on progress in lessons. The school is looking at ways to reward good teaching and enhance the roles of learning support assistants.
- An improved range of subjects are taught in the school. The school is reviewing the activities it offers, with the aim of making subjects more inspirational and thereby make pupils more eager learners. Numeracy and literacy are being reinforced across different subjects by regular revisiting of key concepts.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils develop self-awareness through work on a self-portrait. They are respectful of others and understand right from wrong because of the school's effective 'restorative justice programme' which aims to put things right through review and discussion. The many cultures in the school get on well together and are regularly

celebrated.

- Safeguarding procedures meet all current requirements.
- The school has close links with the local authority. In response to the headteacher's requests, the local authority has helped to provide a detailed programme of support for raising attainment, improving teaching and ensuring that data is accurate.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors bring a good range of skills to the school, including in education and finance. This is reflected in the increasingly precise questions they ask about these aspects at meetings of the governing body. They are able to assess the quality of learning through the regular visits they now make to the school. Governors have a broad understanding of data but recognise the need for further training in this area to identify gaps in attainment more quickly and track progress more rigorously. They know how the pupil premium is spent and that it is being used with increasing effectiveness, through precise interventions and extra staffing, to raise progress rates for eligible pupils. Governors take an active part in the more rigorous arrangements now in place for assessing teachers' performance and are discussing with school leaders how best to reward good teachers.

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	132792
Local authority	Southend-on-Sea
Inspection number	406495

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	404
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Samantha Richardson
Headteacher	Crystal Wiggs
Date of previous school inspection	24 May 2011
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