

Portslade Infants' School

Locks Hill, Portslade, Brighton, BN41 2LA

Inspection dates 27–28 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils achieve well and by the time they leave the school their overall standards of attainment are above average.
- Pupils develop good speaking skills and a good vocabulary.
- Children make a good start to their education. Teachers provide an interesting range of activities which stimulate their interest in learning.
- Teaching is good and a small proportion is outstanding. Good and improving teaching is leading to pupils' rapid progress and rising attainment.
- Pupils are happy at school. They feel safe and this reflects the attention paid by staff and governors to ensuring that all pupils are cared for and their well-being safeguarded.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and act sensibly around the school. They are considerate towards others
- School leaders and governors do a good job. They have a very clear understanding of what the school does well and where improvement lies. They ensure that the management of performance results in improving teaching across the school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not enough outstanding teaching. Work is not always well matched to pupils' abilities in phonics (the link between letters and the sounds they make) and mathematics.
- Pupils in receipt of pupil premium do not attain as well in reading as they do in writing and mathematics.
- Weaker spelling limits the quality of writing of a few pupils. Teachers do not consistently encourage pupils to apply their knowledge of phonics during literacy lessons.
- A small minority of pupils have too many absences and this affects their progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 16 lessons, including 11 which were joint observations with senior leaders, and listened to a sample of pupils from Years 1 and 2 read.
- Inspectors held discussions with pupils, looked at a range of their work and examined the school's data on attainment and progress.
- Meetings were held with representatives of the governing body, senior leaders, teachers and a local authority representative.
- Inspectors considered the 40 responses to the on-line Parent View survey, a few letters from parents and the recent survey of parents' views carried out by the school.
- Inspectors also considered responses to the 19 questionnaires returned by staff.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including plans for improvement, safeguarding arrangements, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and records of school leaders' observations of teaching.

Inspection team

Eileen Chadwick, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Michael Elson	Additional Inspector
Velia Hartland	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Portslade Infants' School is broadly average in size, although the number on roll has fallen in recent years. Currently, there are two Reception, three Year 1 and four Year 2 classes.
- In September 2013, due to school reorganisation, the school will become an all-through two-form entry primary school.
- The school's name from September 2013 will be Brackenbury Primary School and admissions will include Year 3 pupils. The school will grow year on year until by September 2015 it will have Year 6 pupils.
- The large majority of pupils are White British, although over one fifth is from minority ethnic groups, which is above the national average. Pupils are from a wide range of cultural heritages and the proportion who speaks English as an additional language is slightly higher than in most primary schools.
- The percentage of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also above average.
- The proportion of pupils in receipt of pupil premium funding (additional funding provided for looked after children, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children from service families) is above average. Currently, there are no looked after children or children from service families.
- There have been several changes to senior leadership in recent years.
- The school provides a daily breakfast club for pupils. The daily after-school club is separately managed and was not included in this inspection. The report for it can be found on the Ofsted inspections website.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that more is outstanding and pupils' achievement is the best it can be by:
 - ensuring teachers consistently match phonics tasks well to all pupils' needs and enable pupils to apply their knowledge in writing tasks
 - ensuring more able pupils are challenged in mathematics at all times
 - increasing the proportion of pupils eligible for pupil premium who reach at least the expected standards in reading and ensuring pupils' reading records show clear phonics targets
 - ensuring teachers' marking consistently helps pupils to improve their spelling.
- Improve attendance by working directly with parents to ensure their children attend regularly and on time.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children in Reception start school with skills that are below expectations for their age, particularly in communication, early literacy and personal development. They make good progress and quickly become self-confident in the welcoming and supportive environment. Careful checking of the progress of individuals means that, by the end of Reception, all children achieve well in all areas of learning.
- Pupils also achieve well in Key Stage 1. Standards at the end of Year 2 have been improving over the last few years and are above average overall. They are above average in writing and mathematics. They are a little above average in reading, but show signs of continuing improvement in the current Year 2 where there is a rising trend in the proportion reaching the expected levels or above.
- Pupils of different ethnic groups, including those who speak English as an additional language, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make progress similar to their peers. There are robust procedures for helping pupils to catch up, including those at a very early stage of learning English. Extra help through intervention programmes accelerates progress in reading and writing in Key Stage 1. Pupils develop good speaking skills and widen their vocabulary because staff provide memorable, real life experiences for them to talk about.
- Pupils supported by pupil premium achieve well and their attainment is broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. Attainment is not yet as high as their peers and, in the current Year 2, slightly fewer pupils attain the expected standards in reading than in mathematics.
- New approaches to teaching phonics have eradicated the weaknesses seen in the national assessment when the current Year 2 were in Year 1. Pupils heard to read during the inspection confidently use phonics to sound out new words. Just occasionally, adults miss opportunities for ensuring pupils apply their phonics knowledge to support accurate spelling during writing lessons. In a few lessons the more able writers are not being set sufficiently demanding work.
- In Reception, children consistently apply their phonics skills well when reading and writing because adults successfully encourage this through well matched independent and adult led learning activities.
- Most pupils achieve well in mathematics, sometimes the more able pupils are insufficiently challenged and this slows their progress.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is typically good. Lessons capture pupils' attention and motivate pupils to learn. The curriculum, which includes visits and practical work, is well designed and helps teachers to broaden pupils' experiences and develop their literacy, language and numeracy skills. It is generally well structured for enabling teachers to build pupils' basic skills securely in lessons and over time.
- Teachers create calm and purposeful atmospheres and ensure pupils understand what they need to learn. They actively encourage pupils to learn successfully by listening and watching as well as by exploring and solving problems.
- In Reception, adult-led learning involves practical activities which broaden children's language and experience before they undertake abstract tasks such as writing and mathematics. For example, some children acted out stories in their greengrocer's role play area, whilst some developed their mathematical skills extremely well when charging and paying for toy fruit.
- Teaching assistants provide effective support for vulnerable pupils because they are well briefed by teachers. Their work with special educational needs pupils is particularly effective because they know their targets and work effectively to help the pupils achieve them.
- Leaders have worked hard with staff to promote good teaching of reading, writing and

mathematics so that pupils build up their skills as they progress through classes. This year, the school has revised the way it teaches phonics and teachers now follow a consistent approach. Reading skills are mostly taught well but, on a few occasions in phonics lessons, more able pupils are not challenged enough or tasks are rather hard for some lower attaining pupils.

- Good quality reading texts support pupils' love of language and interest in reading and writing. For example, following stimulating reading activities, Year 2 pupils successfully learned how to use figures of speech, such as similes, to enrich their own writing.
- Teachers keep careful checks on pupils' reading progress, but their home/school records do not consistently show pupils' phonics targets. This prevents parents and carers from helping their children to apply their knowledge of sounds and letters consistently when tackling new words and improving their spelling. Teachers' marking is developing well, although some teachers do not always point out inaccuracies in spelling.
- In mathematics, teachers focus sharply on developing pupils' number skills through practical tasks. Lessons are usually well matched to pupils' abilities; although, occasionally, more able pupils are held back when teachers' questions are insufficiently challenging or they sit through explanations of skills they already understand.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils feel valued, safe and well cared for. Their good behaviour is an important reason for their good achievement and personal success. The very large majority of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire say that pupils' behaviour is good and their children feel safe.
- Relationships are excellent and pupils from diverse backgrounds get on extremely well together. This is because the school places a strong emphasis on developing pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are given many opportunities to reflect on the world of nature and the richness of different cultures.
- From their earliest days, children in Reception learn the rules for good behaviour and choose activities sensibly, and develop their independence well. As they move through the school, pupils' ability to take responsibility for some of their own learning continues to grow.
- The school makes every effort to support children whose behaviour is challenging and ensure there is equality of opportunity for all. Any inappropriate behaviour seldom causes interruptions to the learning of others.
- Pupils show good awareness of different forms of bullying and are adamant that it rarely happens. They say that any incidents are dealt with quickly and effectively and they feel confident that adults will sort out any problems. Records show instances of poor behaviour have decreased year on year.
- Pupils are mostly attentive in lessons and respond well to teachers' adherence to school procedures for managing their behaviour. Very occasionally, pupils lose concentration when work is not fully matched to their needs and aspirations.
- The majority of pupils attend regularly. However, a few pupils have persistent absences. Despite the school's stringent procedures for promoting good attendance and signs of improvement this year, overall attendance is just average.
- The breakfast club provides a happy and caring start to the school day.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides the school with clear direction and she is well supported by senior and middle leaders with a good mix of experience. There is a strong vision and determined drive by the headteacher, senior leaders, governors and staff for improvement in all areas that supports pupils' good progress. Senior leaders recognise the need to improve teaching and learning in phonics lessons still further and plans for this are being implemented.

- The changeover to an all-through primary school has been carefully planned and is being managed well, including the necessary reductions to staffing because of the drop in school numbers. The new leadership structure is well thought through and is planned to empower leaders at all levels to play a full part in further raising achievement.
 - The headteacher and school leaders monitor the performance of teachers effectively. By regularly checking the quality of teaching and pupils' progress, they form an accurate view of the school's strengths and those aspects requiring improvement. There is a strong emphasis on improving teaching through coaching, mentoring and staff training.
 - Teachers are given clear guidance on how to improve and promotion and progression through the pay scales are directly tied to classroom performance and its impact on pupils' achievement.
 - Leaders are committed to providing equal opportunities for all pupils. Their careful analysis of the progress of different groups, including those who speak English as an additional language and those known to be pupils eligible for pupil premium, enables them to provide support to any pupils who are in danger of underachieving to ensure they do not fall behind.
 - Additional funding for pupils eligible for pupil premium is used well. This includes the provision of extra help with reading and training courses for parents and carers for supporting reading.
 - The school has made good use of the expertise from the local authority to raise the quality of teaching and learning. The school values the support being given to help to smooth transition to an all-through primary school.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has undertaken training to help further its understanding of school data and is well informed about the performance of the school. It receives regular reports from the headteacher and, through regular focused visits, governors gain first-hand knowledge of the school's work. Governors set robust targets for the performance of the headteacher. They monitor financial decisions, such as spending on the new systems for teaching phonics and allocating the pupil premium, for their effectiveness on raising pupils' achievement. They have an accurate view of teachers' performance and make sure that salaries are matched to performance accurately. All statutory arrangements for safeguarding and child protection are securely in place and meet requirements.
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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	114413
Local authority	Brighton and Hove
Inspection number	405509

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	242
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Harry Steer
Headteacher	Dawn Oliver
Date of previous school inspection	22 March 2011
Telephone number	01273 418850
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