

Portishead Primary School

Station Road, Portishead, BS20 7BD

Inspection dates 19–20 March 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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.

- Achievement is good because pupils attain well above average standards by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils make good progress because teaching is typically good and is sometimes outstanding.
- The headteacher is insistent that all pupils receive the best quality education. Senior and middle leaders share his vision for excellence.
- The choice of subjects and themes taught engage the pupils and this contributes well to their learning.
- Parents hold the school in high regard.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very well promoted through a wide and balanced range of activities and events.
- Governance is good because governors have a secure grasp of the school's strengths and a deep understanding of what the school needs to do next to become outstanding.
- Pupils behave well and say they feel very safe in school. They enjoy school and talk positively about what they learn in lessons. They are very proud of their sporting achievements.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Children in the Reception classes do not always make the progress of which they are capable because their needs are not always fully met. The outdoor area is not used effectively to promote learning and parents do not have regular access to their children's learning diaries.
- Not all of the most able pupils do as well as they might because the questions asked of them do not require deep thinking or encourage them to develop their skills further.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 20 lessons or parts of lessons taught by 11 teachers. Fourteen of these observations were carried out with senior and middle leaders. They also undertook walks around the school to look at pupils' work books and the displays in classrooms and around the school. In addition, they heard pupils read, observed them at play and in assembly and met with them to take account of their views.
- A wide range of school documentation was analysed and evaluated, including that relating to safeguarding, pupil progress information, staff training, improvement plans, monitoring records and minutes from governors' meetings.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and senior and middle leaders as well as the Chair of the Governing Body and four other governors. Inspectors also met with the School Improvement and Learning Partner from the local authority.
- The 135 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, were considered as well as 22 questionnaires returned by staff.
- During this inspection, inspectors asked additional questions designed to ascertain the school's view of the impact and effectiveness of local authority services to support school improvement. This information will contribute to work being carried out by Ofsted to assess the use, quality and impact of those services.

Inspection team

Lorna Brackstone, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Lesley Voaden

Additional Inspector

George Long

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Portishead Primary is a larger-than-average primary school.
- Most pupils are White British.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported by school action is lower than the national average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is lower than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by extra funding for those who are eligible for free school meals, those from service families and those looked after by the local authority (pupil premium) is well below the national average.
- The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and those learning English as an additional language is well below average.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 2.
- The total number of classes is 15. There are two classes per year group except for Year 2 where there are three classes.
- The current headteacher took up his post in September 2012.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the progress made in the Reception classes by:
 - ensuring that the activities planned and the organisation of provision fully meet the needs of every child
 - improving the use of the outdoor area as a learning resource for early literacy and numeracy skills
 - enabling parents to make a greater contribution to their children's learning by making sure that learning diaries are accessible to them.
- Ensure that all teachers enable the more able pupils to make as much progress as possible by asking them questions which deepen their learning and give them opportunities to think for themselves.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children are well prepared for starting school and demonstrate skills that are above those typically expected for their age group. Although they reach a good level of development at the end of their Reception Year, inspectors, senior leaders and governors all agree that they are capable of developing their early literacy and numeracy skills at a much faster pace.
- At the time of the last inspection, pupils' progress in Years 1 and 2 was identified as an area which needed improving. Although overall standards at the end of Year 2 have remained above the national average for the past few years, there has been an inconsistency in pupils' achievement, particularly in mathematics. Not all pupils were making sufficient progress from their starting points.
- Following a programme of training for teachers and a new key leadership appointment, current Year 2 pupils are now making much better progress in their learning and demonstrate an improved use of their knowledge and skills. For example, by giving the pupils time to write at length and respond to the feedback teachers give them, writing skills have improved. 'Number crunching' sessions where pupils are grouped according to their ability are providing pupils, especially the more able, with challenge and opportunities to use their mathematical skills to solve everyday problems.
- Year 6 pupils consistently achieve standards that are significantly above national averages for their age and their current work indicates that this is being well maintained. Although there are patches of inconsistency as they move through Years 3 to 6, overall progress through this key stage is good.
- Until recently, data showed that pupils who were eligible for extra funding and those who were disabled or had special educational needs did not do as well as their peers. Current data maintained by the school and supported by pupils' work show that these pupils have made accelerated progress. This is because they are now not only fully involved in their own class sessions but also receive individual support. Consequently, on average they are about one term ahead of their peers. Some pupils who have been receiving this extra support have made outstanding progress from September 2013, as demonstrated in the two attainment levels they have gained.
- Pupils make good progress in their reading and by the end of Year 6 they are significantly above the national average. They enjoy reading and show a good level of understanding of the books they read.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is not yet outstanding because it is not typically good in the Reception classes. The organisation of the day does not lend itself to the most effective learning and not enough use is made of the outdoor environment to develop early literacy and numeracy skills and help children learn through stimulating activities. Children are not challenged sufficiently well because they are not given tasks that match their abilities. There are missed opportunities for parents to contribute to their children's learning diaries.
- Although teachers' expectations of what the pupils can achieve have improved, there are still some classes where the most able do not always make as much progress as possible because the questions asked of them do not require deep thinking or encourage them to think for themselves.
- Pupils learn well when they are given time to talk about their ideas with a partner. Helpful links are made with previous lessons and this enables the pupils to move forward quickly in their learning. Books are consistently marked using the school policy and this enables the pupils to understand what they need to do next in their learning.

- High quality teaching in mathematics gave the pupils some time to think about what had been said about their last piece of work. They then used this feedback to make sure that they applied their skills correctly to some everyday problems they were given to solve. Teachers make sure that their pupils know how well they are working and give them sensible targets to help them improve their work. Pupils were observed looking very pleased with their learning when they managed to meet their targets to use 'adventurous words' confidently.
- Teaching assistants are generally deployed effectively in the classroom. They work closely with the class teachers and provide good support for pupils. Teaching assistants in the Reception classes do not always support the children's development as well as they could.
- Successful learning takes place for those pupils with special educational needs when they are well supported in their class, with clear targets for development which are regularly recorded and evaluated. Additional individual support enables these pupils to focus specific areas to develop which will support future work.
- Additional funding has had a good impact on those eligible to receive it because they are given the support they need to achieve as well as their peers. For example, following extra sessions to teach letters and sounds, all pupils in Year 1 who are entitled to this specific funding met the level expected for their age group. Boys in Years 2 and 4 have received extra help to improve their writing skills and their progress in reading has been accelerated because of the high quality support they get on a daily basis.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour is good. They are extremely polite and courteous and get along with each other very well. The pupils are eager to learn, work well in pairs and groups and listen to their teachers carefully. There is a purposeful working buzz around school and the only occasional low-level disruption is when teaching is not good enough to hold the pupils' attention.
- The pupils are proud of their responsibilities, such as house captains, members of the school council and playground leaders. Their behaviour is not outstanding because they do not take responsibility to extend their own learning and consistently think for themselves.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils are punctual and attendance rates have improved and are in line with national averages. There are no pupils who are regularly absent from school. In the past there have been some parental concerns about incidents of bullying but clearer lines of communication between home and school ensure that any behavioural concerns are dealt with appropriately. Following the introduction of new behaviour strategies, there was an increase in fixed-term exclusions and recorded incidents. However, with the successful implementation of these strategies, the number of incidents recorded has significantly declined.
- Pupils talk of occasional incidents when inappropriate words or phrases are used but they know these must be reported and they feel confident to do so. They have a very clear understanding of cyber bullying and e-safety and know that they must be cautious when using social media sites.
- By establishing clearer ways to investigate parental concerns or complaints, the results of the on-line questionnaire indicate positive views about the behaviour and safety of their children and parents are comfortable about the way the school deals with concerns.

The leadership and management are good

- It is crystal clear that the headteacher has the highest ambitions for the pupils and he is very well supported in this by key members of staff and the governors. His insistence that every pupil is entitled to the best possible education has not been well received by all team members and

this, coupled with a number of personal circumstances, has resulted in a high staff turnover and a significant proportion of temporary teachers being employed. However, the headteacher has built a cohesive team of senior and middle leaders around him who support his vision in securing the very best outcomes for all the pupils. Consequently, the capacity for the school to make further improvements is strong.

- Senior leaders and middle managers have a good understanding of the strengths of the school and what needs to improve further. School improvement planning is clear and the impact of development work is carefully measured against an agreed criterion.
- The headteacher is successfully tackling historical pockets of underachievement in the school. This is demonstrated well by the improving standards in Year 2 and the way in which those pupils who are entitled to the pupil premium and those who are disabled or have special educational needs have closed the gap between them and their peers and are, in fact, progressing at a faster rate.
- One of the ways the headteacher has achieved this is through the introduction of a rigorous process of checking and tracking the performance of teachers and providing support and development where it is required. For example, the headteacher organised additional training for some teachers who required improvement and the impact of this on their performance has been strong. The headteacher maintains detailed monitoring records which are regularly shared with key governors. These records show that the overall quality of teaching and learning has improved considerably in a short space of time, especially in Key Stage 1. All leaders are fully aware that improvements are needed in the Reception classes.
- By introducing new ways to support pupils with special educational needs and those who use English as an additional language, the headteacher has ensured that all individuals are fully included in class lessons and contribute to the life of the school.
- Subjects are taught through different topics that begin or end with a special event. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very well promoted through a wide and balanced range of subjects, activities and events. These include links with the local church minister and specialist teaching in art, sport and music. Pupils enjoy organising events to support charities, such as Sports Relief and the local lifeboat emergency service.
- The primary school sports funding is being used effectively to fund a greater choice of after-school clubs for the pupils, and to enable more pupils to attend sporting events and competitions within the local cluster of school and the county. It is also being used to engage pupils who find their behaviour difficult to manage and those who lack motivation in sport.
- The school has a strong partnership with parents and members of the local community. It is clear that the work of the school is highly regarded and almost all the parents who responded to the on-line Ofsted Parent View would recommend the school to others.
- The School Improvement Lead Professional, known as the SILP, very effectively supports and challenges the senior staff and governors. Although the SILP works on behalf of the local authority, senior leaders are directed to visit good practice in schools which are further afield. Improving standards in mathematics is a successful outcome of training from a subject adviser from the local authority and governors speak positively about the advice they have received from the human resources department. The dip in the progress made by the younger pupils in school did go unnoticed until it was flagged up when the headteacher took up his post. Advice from the Early Years team has not always proved to be helpful and, at times, senior leaders feel isolated from the hub of the local authority. The school finds that it can access the best support from a local academy which provides high quality support for those teachers who require improvement.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors feel justifiably proud of the appointment of their headteacher and fully support the way in which he has rigorously challenged performance that is not good enough. They use their professional expertise from the world of work effectively to support the school in all aspects of leadership and management. This is well demonstrated in the way they have recently evaluated the charges made for their information and communication technology service and are now seeking alternative ways to fund this. They clearly demonstrate their

clarity of vision to meet the needs of this growing school. Building works are carefully considered for best value and the reorganisation of the administration structure, which includes the appointment of a bursar, is enabling key leaders to devote more time to maintaining the drive to improve teaching and learning.

- Governors are well trained and kept up to date with changes through briefings and 'away days' to discuss future plans for the school and action points. They are clear about the management of teachers' performance. They are clear about what is being done to reward good teaching and what is being done to manage teaching that is not of the best quality. By keeping a close check on the way that extra funding is spent, the Chair of Governors ensures that best use is made of pupil premium. They are regular visitors into school and engage well with both pupils and parents by attending 'governor surgeries' and open evenings and spending time in classes. Governors use their knowledge to ask searching questions of the headteacher and other leaders.
- Governors are meticulous in the way that they ensure safeguarding arrangements fully meet all statutory requirements.

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	109074
Local authority	North Somerset
Inspection number	431472

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	447
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Elizabeth Lockwood
Headteacher	Richard Riordan
Date of previous school inspection	24–25 March 2009
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