

Portfield Primary Academy

St James Road, Chichester, West Sussex PO19 7HA

Inspection dates

13–14 July 2016

Overall effectiveness

Good

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The executive headteacher, head of school and governing body have halted a decline in standards in English and mathematics since the executive headteacher's appointment in September 2015.
- Leaders have taken swift action to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment during the past year.
- Teachers have much higher expectations of pupils' learning and behaviour than at the time of the previous inspection.
- Substantial improvements in teaching have lifted pupils' outcomes in all key stages. Pupils' progress has accelerated dramatically since the previous inspection. They make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics across the school.
- Leaders have secured substantial improvements in the quality of teaching and learning in early years. Children make good progress during Reception Year and are well placed for the next stage of their education in Year 1.
- Pupils in the Special Support Centre (SSC) make rapid progress. Adults understand and respond well to pupils' needs.
- Pupils behave well and get on well together. They are keen to learn, polite and caring.
- Pupils are safe and secure. They know that adults in school take good care of them and are confident that they will sort out any concerns.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Sometimes pupils make slower progress during lessons because their teachers do not respond well enough to their needs.
- Outcomes are too low, despite improvements over the past year.
- Some parents are unclear about improvements in the school.
- Though falling, absence and fixed-term exclusion rates are too high.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to improve outcomes and ensure that pupils achieve their full potential by:
 - making sure that teachers respond more effectively to pupils' needs during lessons
 - reducing the absence and fixed-term exclusion rates.

- Improve communication with parents so that they are well informed about the school's work and about improvements in its performance since the previous inspection.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The executive headteacher and head of school have brought a greater sense of urgency to the school's development since their appointment. They have worked constructively with the trust to lead the school during a turbulent period. They have acted quickly and successfully to address the underachievement caused by numerous changes in teaching and leadership. Leaders and the academy trust are justifiably pleased with the unvalidated positive results achieved in the 2016 national tests at the end of Year 6.
- The executive headteacher and head of school lead their colleagues with good-humoured determination. Staff morale is high. All those who completed the online questionnaire feel the school has improved since the previous inspection and all are proud to work in the school.
- Leaders have maintained pupils' good behaviour during a period of change and uncertainty. The school has a friendly, calm and purposeful atmosphere. Revised behaviour management systems have established clarity and consistency for staff, pupils and parents. Good relationships between adults and pupils underpin pupils' good behaviour, safety and well-being.
- Leaders have eradicated an element of weak teaching and increased teachers' accountability for pupils' achievement. They regularly check the quality of teaching, learning and assessment through visits to lessons, reviews of the work in pupils' books and in meetings with teachers to discuss pupils' progress.
- The head of school has played a key role in securing substantial and secure improvements in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment during the past year. She and her colleagues provide positive, constructive support for individual teachers. They provide good-quality training to help teachers to improve their practice, including visits to other academies in the trust.
- Subject leadership has improved considerably since the previous inspection. This is due, in part, to the school's close association with other academies in the trust and the sharing of expertise. All leaders now have a shared view of the school's performance and know the priorities for improvement.
- The teacher in charge of the Special Support Centre works effectively alongside her colleagues to ensure that pupils who attend the unit participate fully in all aspects of school life and make good progress.
- Effective use of pupil premium funding has improved disadvantaged pupils' progress and achievement during the past year. For example, teachers have successfully tailored individual teaching and small-group work to address gaps in pupils' learning caused by historic weaknesses in teaching. As a result, gaps in attainment with pupils nationally have narrowed.
- Leaders ensure that pupils study a broad, balanced range of subjects. They have introduced curriculum plans across the school so that teaching builds more effectively on pupils' learning as they move up through the year groups. This has contributed to improvements in pupils' progress during the past year. Events, clubs and trips add extra interest to pupils' learning and contribute to their enjoyment of school. For example, during the inspection pupils in Year 3 talked enthusiastically about a recent trip to the zoo and about what they had learned about the animals.
- Teaching ensures that pupils learn about different faiths and beliefs, with regular opportunities for them to think quietly and reflect during events such as assemblies. The school's friendly, inclusive atmosphere successfully encourages pupils to be caring, respectful and thoughtful.
- Leaders use primary school physical education and sports premium effectively to encourage pupils' participation in a range of sports and to improve the quality of physical education teaching. For example, the school employs a sports development officer, who provides specialist coaching for pupils and advice for teachers. The school's participation in sports events has increased since the previous inspection, so that more pupils are involved in sport than previously.
- Pupils speak knowledgeably about British values and are able to explain what they mean in relation to their own experiences. For example, pupils elected by their peers to act as 'playmakers' during playtimes understand their responsibility for helping pupils to play fairly and to follow the rules. They carry out their responsibilities maturely and in a friendly manner.
- Leaders maintain close links with colleagues working in agencies and alternative providers to check the progress, attendance and well-being of the very few pupils who attend.
- More rigorous checks on pupils' attendance have increased attendance rates during the past year. The inclusion leader and executive headteacher meet weekly to review individual pupils' attendance and regularly speak with parents about improvements and developments. Leaders' insistence that pupils attend regularly, combined with support for families wherever appropriate, ensure that pupils attend school more regularly. However, leaders recognise that attendance rates are not yet high enough, and

this continues to be a focus in the school's improvement. They have appropriate plans in place to secure further improvements and continue to focus robustly on improving attendance.

- Parents' views of the school are largely positive. However, several changes in senior leadership have understandably affected some parents' views of the school's work. Leaders have strengthened communication with parents during the past year. For example, they have organised workshops to give parents information about the school's approach to writing. The numbers of parents attending such events have increased dramatically. However, leaders recognise that there is more to be done to earn parents' confidence in the school and to inform them about its work.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors have an accurate view of the school's work. They regularly visit the school to help in the classrooms or to attend special events, as well as meeting with leaders. As a result, they have a good working knowledge of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and of pupils' behaviour.
 - The team of enthusiastic and committed governors have worked effectively with the academy trust since the previous inspection to support the school's development, with an increased sense of urgency in the past year. They are acutely aware of the need to ensure a settled and productive period for the school. Governors have completed thorough checks to ensure the appointment of senior leaders who have the right attributes to move the school forward and a proven track record of success. They are understandably pleased with the improvements in teaching, learning and assessment secured by the new leadership team. However, they are not complacent and have a clear view of the next steps needed to take the school to the next stage in its development.
 - Governors recognise, for example, that governors need to complete more rigorous checks on some aspects of the school's work, particularly on pupils' attendance and on information provided on its website, to ensure that it consistently meets requirements in providing information about the school's performance. They have appropriate plans in place to improve this aspect of their work, with a newly appointed governor in post with the specialist expertise needed to ensure that this is the case.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders ensure that recruitment and suitability checks are completed when appointing new members of staff. Members of staff and governors attend appropriate training so that they have a current knowledge of safeguarding issues, including the risks of radicalisation and extremism. Leaders respond quickly and seriously to any concerns, contacting parents promptly where necessary, so that pupils are safe and secure.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- The quality of teaching and assessment has improved substantially since the previous inspection. Teachers have much higher expectations of pupils' learning and behaviour. Pupils say that their teachers are helpful and dedicated. They feel that teaching has improved during the past year and say they are making better progress as a result, a view corroborated by inspectors during the inspection.
- Developments in teaching have rapidly improved the quality of pupils' work and their progress in English and mathematics during the past year. Teachers plan lessons which are securely grounded in the school's updated approach to teaching reading, writing and numeracy skills. This ensures that learning builds consistently well on pupils' knowledge and understanding as they move up through the year groups. Teachers set work which is increasingly demanding for pupils of all abilities, including the most able.
- In the past year, teachers have successfully focused on addressing gaps in pupils' English knowledge caused by historical underachievement. For example, they have made sure that pupils have a secure grasp of fundamental English skills, including grammar and punctuation, so that pupils have the tools needed to write well. The development of a consistent, systematic approach to phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) teaching has strengthened younger pupils' confidence in reading and writing.
- The school's mathematics curriculum is now securely established throughout the school, ensuring a consistent approach to mathematics teaching in all year groups. This gives teachers a firm foundation for teaching and ensures that they know what they are teaching, when and why. Teachers are much more confident about mathematics teaching than at the time of the previous inspection as a result.
- Teachers have consistently high expectations of the way pupils complete and present their work. They follow the school's policy for giving pupils feedback about their work so that they are clear about how well they are learning. Teachers give pupils specific advice about how to improve their work. For example, they give the younger pupils timely reminders about using capital letters at the start of sentences.
- Adults are knowledgeable about pupils' needs. They use this to good effect to plan work which builds firmly on pupils' learning, including for those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Strong relationships, consistently high expectations and skilful teaching ensure that those pupils who attend the Special Support Centre make rapid progress, both personally and academically.

- Teaching assistants, like teachers, have improved their practice considerably during the past year. They are much clearer about how and when to support pupils' learning and work effectively alongside teachers.
- While teaching has improved considerably, some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and assessment remain. For example, some teachers do not respond as effectively to pupils' needs during lessons as others, so that pupils make slower progress at times.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils say they feel very safe in school. They say that teachers listen to their views and help them if they have any worries. This helps them to feel confident and secure.
- Pupils know about some of the risks associated with using social media and the internet and what they can do help to keep themselves safe. They say that special assemblies and talks by the police remind them about the importance of issues such as road safety.
- Pupils in Year 6 say that 'learning is fun'. They say that the school has helped them to get ready for secondary school and feel well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Older pupils perform roles of responsibility maturely. For example, the Year 6 playmakers help the younger pupils to play games. One explained, 'If someone is upset, we play with them and do our best to make them laugh.' Pupils of all ages enjoy participating in a wide range of trips and clubs.
- Pupils get on very well together and often help each other out if they are finding the work tricky. For example, during the inspection a pupil gave a classmate some support by suggesting some words that he could use to make his writing more interesting.
- While most pupils are very keen to do well, some are less positive about learning and find it difficult to sustain concentration during lessons.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They behave responsibly and sensibly during playtimes, lunchtimes and assemblies. Pupils follow clear, well-established routines at the end of playtimes so that they are back in the classrooms promptly and ready for work.
- Leaders have improved the quality of support for pupils with significant behavioural needs and reduced the numbers of exclusions over the past year. For example, they have reviewed and updated the behaviour policy to clarify expectations and sanctions. Leaders have strengthened arrangements to support those pupils who have significant behavioural and emotional needs by working more closely with agencies and making sure that teachers make good use of specialist advice. High-quality teaching in the nurture group equips pupils with the personal and social skills needed to learn well. While exclusion rates were higher than the national average in 2015, school records indicate a continuing trend of improvement.
- Pupils say that their teachers sort out the very few incidents of bullying quickly. School records indicate that bullying is rare and that leaders follow appropriate procedures wherever there are concerns.
- Adults in the Special Support Centre have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. They consistently follow the school's policy for managing behaviour and this helps pupils to work confidently in both the Special Support Centre and in the classrooms. Pupils who attend the Special Support Centre want to do their best and are pleased when their work earns their teacher's praise.
- Attendance rates have increased during the past year and the proportions of pupils who are persistently absent have declined. However, leaders recognise that attendance rates are not yet high enough.
- In the past, an element of weak teaching meant that, in some cases, teachers' expectations of pupils' behaviour were too low. Leaders have addressed this during the past year, so that all teachers expect the best of their pupils. Pupils have noticed the difference, remarking on better behaviour over the past year and commenting that 'school is a happier place'. However, while most pupils behave very well, some become distracted during lessons from time to time, so that the pace of their learning slows.
- There are too few pupils attending alternative provision to report on their personal development, behaviour and welfare in this report.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Substantial improvements in leadership and teaching during the current year have quickened pupils' progress, particularly during key stage 1. The quality of pupils' learning continues to improve across the school, lifting pupils' outcomes. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education by the end of Year 6.
- In the past, weaknesses in teaching and numerous staff changes hindered pupils' progress, leading to low standards at the end of all key stages. Rapid improvements in the quality of teaching have secured a strongly improving trend in the quality of all pupils' learning, including the most able. The school's recent results in the English and mathematics tests at the end of Year 6 are in line with national averages in 2016.
- Effective, consistent and well-planned mathematics teaching gives pupils the knowledge and skills they need to achieve well. Teachers have swiftly addressed gaps in pupils' knowledge of key mathematical skills caused by historical weaknesses in teaching. This has ensured that pupils across the school are working at levels which are at least in line with those expected for their age and so are well placed to secure further gains. The work in pupils' books illustrates pupils' increasing ability to select and use calculations to tackle number problems efficiently.
- The gaps between disadvantaged pupils' attainment and other pupils nationally increased at the end of Year 6 in 2015 due to low expectations in the past. However, disadvantaged pupils' progress has increased dramatically during the past year. Their work illustrates the same rapid progress in English and mathematics as other pupils, raising outcomes for this group in all year groups.
- Strong relationships, clear expectations and carefully planned tasks ensure that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. For example, pupils working in the nurture group during the inspection were clearly determined to do well, concentrating hard on phonics and spelling tasks. The work in pupils' books indicates teachers' success in building individual pupils' confidence and ability to complete English and mathematics tasks with increasing skill.
- Pupils who attend the Special Support Centre make rapid progress because teaching effectively supports pupils' individual needs. Pupils develop strategies which help them to get on well during lessons, both with and without direct adult support. For example, they learn to read their written work aloud so that they can spot and correct gaps or mistakes in their work more efficiently.
- Pupils of all ages enjoy reading. They speak with interest about preferences in the types of books they like to read. They use an increasing range of strategies to read successfully, including phonics. The most able pupils read thoughtfully and with expression. They enjoy the extra challenge provided by some of the more demanding books in the library.
- In the past, inconsistencies in the teaching of phonics meant that the results of the Year 1 phonics check were consistently lower than national averages. Substantial improvements in the teaching of phonics have led to a marked increase in the proportions of pupils achieving expected levels in 2016. Developments in phonics teaching are now well established, so that pupils are equipped with reliable strategies to support their reading. For example, during the inspection, younger pupils explained how they break up more difficult words to help them to read successfully.
- Pupils make good progress in writing. The good-quality work in their English books illustrates their increasing confidence and skill in writing for different purposes. For example, pupils in Year 1 use a range of techniques, such as adverbs and similes, to write descriptions of landscapes and settings, while pupils in Year 6 learn to use vocabulary effectively to write persuasively.
- Pupils make increasingly rapid progress in a wide range of subjects, such as history and geography. For example, at the time of the inspection, all year groups were working on topics related to wild animals. They were interested and enthused, thoughtfully completing good-quality work on subjects such as animals' characteristics and whether animals should be kept in zoos.

Early years provision

is good

- In the past, too few children achieved a good level of development at the end of Reception Year due to weaknesses in teaching. However, substantial improvements in teaching, learning and assessment over the past year have secured a dramatic increase in children's outcomes in 2016. Good teaching ensures that children make rapid progress and achieve well. Children are increasingly well prepared for the next stage of their learning in Year 1 by the end of Reception Year.
- Leaders provide effective coaching and training for early years staff. For example, they give teachers opportunities to share ideas with colleagues in other schools in the trust. This has improved the breadth

and quality of the curriculum in early years, with all areas of learning represented in the activities provided.

- Adults provide activities which nurture children's natural curiosity in the world. For example, during the inspection, children could hardly contain their delight in finding mini-beasts, watching them in fascinated concentration. Some busily ticked off their finds on clipboards while others worked together to build a city out of blocks for the ants emerging from a hole between the paving stones. Adults make good use of the opportunity to remind children to handle creatures carefully. The way children looked after their finds, carefully returning them to their habitats afterwards, illustrates their care and respect for living things.
- Leaders and teachers carefully evaluate children's starting points at the start of Reception Year and plan learning effectively to meet children's differing needs. Children of all abilities and backgrounds quickly settle into school and make good progress as a result, including the most able, disadvantaged children and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The small number of disadvantaged children make the same good progress as their classmates and often better.
- The early years teacher has developed good links with parents. For example, he often speaks with them informally at the start and end of the school day, as well as during more formal events such as parents' evenings. Parents say they feel teachers are approachable and welcoming and increasing numbers attend workshops about the school's approach to teaching subjects such as writing. For example, all parents of children attended a recent writing workshop.
- Leaders have recently improved assessment procedures, making it easier for parents to find out about their children's progress and giving them more opportunities to contact teachers. Parents recognise improvements in the school since the previous inspection. Increasing numbers choose to send their children to the school.
- Leaders give safeguarding arrangements a high priority. For example, secure gates and fencing in the outdoor area keep children safe while they play and learn. Well-qualified, knowledgeable staff take good care of the children so that they are safe and comfortable. Most children behave well and listen carefully to adults.
- While leaders have clearly improved the outdoor area so that it is well-resourced, attractive and safe, adults do not always use discussions with children fully to evaluate their understanding and extend their learning.
- Teachers focus successfully on making sure that children have the speaking and language skills needed to express and communicate their feelings and ideas clearly. They work closely with speech and language assistants to provide individualised speech and language programmes. As a result, some children who found it difficult to talk about their ideas at the start of the year are much more confident. Improved language skills have secured rapid improvements in children's progress in reading and writing.

School details

Unique reference number	138402
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	10012326

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	163
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Johnson
Headteacher	James Munt (executive headteacher) Kate Couldwell (head of school)
Telephone number	01243 783939
Website	www.portfield-tkat.org
Email address	office@portfield-tkat.org
Date of previous inspection	18–19 June 2014

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Portfield Primary Academy is part of the Kemnal Academies Trust (TKAT).
- The proportion of pupils supported by pupil premium funding is higher than that found in most schools. The pupil premium is additional government funding to support those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is lower than the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school has a Special Support Centre (SSC) for pupils who have speech and language needs. Sixteen pupils between the ages of four and 11 currently attend the SSC. Pupils have some of their lessons in the SSC and some in the school's main classrooms.
- The school provides full-time early years provision in the Reception class.
- The school operates a breakfast club on the school premises which was included in this inspection.
- One pupil currently attends an alternative provider on a full-time temporary basis.
- The school meets the requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- There have been several changes in headship since the previous inspection. The executive headteacher was appointed in September 2015 and the head of school was appointed in January 2016.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed learning in 13 lessons or part-lessons, including seven observed jointly with a senior leader.
- The inspection team held discussions with the headteacher, senior leaders, a local authority representative, the director of the academy trust, teachers, members of staff, parents and pupils. A meeting also took place with the chair of the governing body and three other governors.
- The inspection team took account of the six responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. In addition, inspectors considered the views expressed by parents, who spoke with them informally during the school day. They also took account of the views expressed in 14 responses to the staff questionnaire and 20 pupil questionnaires.
- The inspection team observed the school's work and considered a range of documents, including the improvement plan, information about pupils' progress and attendance, and safeguarding policies.
- The inspection team looked at a sample of pupils' work provided by the school, as well as looking at pupils' work in lessons. They also listened to pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 reading.

Inspection team

Julie Sackett, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Roderick Welsh

Ofsted Inspector

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