

# Portsdown Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	116258
<b>Local Authority</b>	Portsmouth
<b>Inspection number</b>	357925
<b>Inspection dates</b>	8–9 December 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Michael Pye

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

The registered childcare provision, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	0–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	330
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Sandra Downs
<b>Headteacher</b>	Irene Baldry
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	16 January 2008
<b>School address</b>	Sundridge Close, Wymering Cosham , Portsmouth PO6 3JL
<b>Telephone number</b>	02392 378991
<b>Fax number</b>	02392 215922
<b>Email address</b>	admin@portsdown.portsmouth.sch.uk

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<b>Age group</b>	0–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	8–9 December 2010
<b>Inspection number</b>	357925

**Number of children on roll in the registered  
childcare provision**

**Date of last inspection of registered  
childcare provision**

Not previously inspected

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 15 lessons, and saw a total of 14 teachers. They spoke to parents and held meetings with governors, pupils and staff. They observed the school's work, and looked at data relating to pupils' attainment and progress. The school's development plan, lesson and curriculum plans, governing body minutes and school policies and procedures, particularly those relating to the health and safety and safeguarding of pupils, were scrutinised. Inspectors also looked at completed questionnaires returned by pupils and those from 173 parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following.

- How effective leaders and managers have been in addressing the dip in pupils' progress in Key Stage 2.
- How well teachers, particularly at Key Stage 2, use assessment information to plan work that challenges pupils of all abilities, and whether all pupil groups make similar progress.
- How effectively leaders and managers, at all levels, monitor and evaluate the work of the school and plan for future development.
- The use of assessment and recording systems in the Early Years Foundation Stage, and how effectively the information is used to plan the next steps in children's learning.

## Information about the school

Pupils in this above average size school come from a predominantly White British background. The next largest ethnic groups consist of pupils from Asian (Indian), and Black African backgrounds. The school has an on-site, local authority designated Development and Assessment Unit for pupils with specific speech, language and communication needs. These pupils contribute to the proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities being well above average. The next largest group of these pupils have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. The number of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs is above the expected level.

Provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage is delivered through two Reception classes and an on-site, local authority nursery, for which governors have responsibility. They also have responsibility for the 0?3 pre-school provision. These formed part of the school inspection. Adjacent to the nursery is a children's centre which is subject to a separate inspection.

The school also runs breakfast and after-school clubs on the site. The school has been nationally recognised through the Healthy School award.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**3**

## Main findings

The school provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. The care, guidance and support of pupils are good. The pupils say that they feel safe and well cared for. Parents show their appreciation of this aspect of the school's work, with comments such as, 'delighted with the school' and 'a wonderful school where nothing is too much trouble'. Aspects of pupils' personal development are good, and they behave well. They show respect for each other's views and have a strong sense of fairness. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

Children make satisfactory progress during the Early Years Foundation Stage. Overall, progress is satisfactory. However, in recent years there has been consistently good progress in Key Stage 1, whereas it has slowed for the younger pupils in Key Stage 2. The rate of progress in Key Stage 2 is now improving. Since the last inspection attainment at the end of Year 6 had been well below average, reflecting a dip in pupils' progress during Key Stage 2. The school's self-evaluation identified inconsistencies in the quality of teaching in the early years of the key stage as being responsible for the dip. Leadership embedded a regular cycle of lesson monitoring and work scrutiny which has brought improvement and attainment is now broadly average. Significant weaknesses in the quality of teaching have been eradicated; during the inspection almost half the lessons observed were either good or outstanding, reflecting the progress made to improve teaching. Overall, teaching is satisfactory. There remain occasional inconsistencies, especially in teachers' use of assessment data to set challenging work for pupils of all abilities. While teachers' marking in literacy is good, in other subjects the pupils do not consistently receive clear messages about how to improve their work.

In the main school the curriculum satisfactorily meets the needs of pupils. Progress in problem solving slows because there is an inconsistency in the opportunities pupils have to investigate in mathematics and science. The enrichment opportunities presented to pupils are good, with pupils eager to promote the Friday 'Academy' as being challenging and very enjoyable. This allows them to access a good variety of activities, including gardening and cooking through the 'Digging the Dirt' sessions, and a 'Design an Outfit' project that ended up with a catwalk show. This has had a positive effect on encouraging pupils to attend. Similarly, the breakfast club has been effective in encouraging better attendance among some targeted pupils. Such strategies have been well used by school leaders. Consequently, attendance has improved and is now broadly average, although to the lower level of that band. This, together with pupils' level of basic skills, prepares them satisfactorily for the next stage of their education. However, there remains more to do, particularly in heightening the profile of good attendance within the school.

Pupils in the Development and Assessment Unit (DAU) are well managed by the adults who know their needs well. The pupils make good progress in learning basic skills, and are

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beginning to develop positive work habits. Most of the pupils are from the Early Years Foundation Stage and teachers tailor the curriculum well to meet the specific needs of these children, for example using small group work. There are limited opportunities for pupils to initiate their own learning in the outside area and progress dips in this respect.

Leaders, at all levels, are empowered to monitor their areas of responsibility. ♦ Accurate self-evaluation has led to appropriate development objectives being identified. This has resulted in improvements such as in the good use of progress reviews to quickly identify pupils needing further support, and the improved feedback to pupils in literacy. The improving levels of the quality of teaching, together with pupils making consistently better progress and achieving higher standards, demonstrate the school's satisfactory capacity to improve. However, some development objectives are too general and this makes it difficult for managers to measure the success of any changes introduced, particularly on pupils' achievement levels. Additionally, subject development plans do not show clearly how they support the objectives in the whole school plan. The governing body makes sound contributions to the self-evaluation of the school but does not focus sufficiently on the impact of school actions on the achievement of pupils.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Eradicate the remaining inconsistencies in teaching, and consequently improve attainment and progress by ensuring that all teachers:
  - use assessment data to plan work that challenges pupils of all abilities
  - give clear guidance to pupils about how to improve their work in all subjects.
- Raise attendance to the upper end of the average band by heightening the profile within the school and among parents.
- Ensure there are more opportunities for the Early Year's Foundation Stage children in the Development and Assessment Unit to initiate their own learning in the outdoor area.
- Sharpen the skills of leaders and managers by ensuring that:
  - all development plans have measurable success criteria that are linked to the achievement of pupils, and that subject action plans clearly show how they support the whole-school development plan
  - monitoring and evaluation by the governing body focus on the effect of school actions on the achievement of pupils.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**3**

Pupils enjoy their schooling and achieve satisfactorily. Great excitement is shown when pupils make use of the interactive hall floor. In one Year 3 lesson pupils reacted well to the stimulation provided, and eagerly gave ideas about poems relating to the highly topical subjects of cold and snow. Pupils from the DAU use the same equipment and showed great enjoyment when noticing the impact of the wind and the effect of their actions on 'clearing' leaves. Pupils from different ethnic groups are fully included, for example enthusiastically giving examples of how to perform poetry in an English lesson. Consequently, they make similar progress to their White British peers.

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Pupils leave Reception with just below the expected levels of skills and knowledge. In the last three years pupils have made good progress in Key Stage 1 and overall attainment has been above average by the end of Year 2. Historically, this progress has been slower in the early years of Key Stage 2, but this is being effectively addressed. All groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are now making satisfactory progress throughout Key Stage 2. The school has focused well on improving boys' writing and they react well to the opportunities to 'talk and write'. Consequently, they are progressing satisfactorily and the past gender gap is reducing.

Pupils say they feel safe, and the positive effect of the school's work in attaining the national award is seen in their good knowledge of how to eat healthily and the benefits of exercise. Pupils enjoy the various posts of responsibilities they have within the school. School councillors make meaningful decisions, for example, over playground activities. They tell of enjoying singing in the local community, but there are insufficient opportunities for them to further participate outside the school. They react positively to opportunities to reflect, such as during their church visit, and when thinking during assembly about the situation for pupils in a contrasting South African school. The school acknowledges the need to develop more opportunities for pupils to learn about other cultures.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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## How effective is the provision?

Teachers have secure subject knowledge. As a result there is good targeted questioning of pupils. For example, in a Year 6 mathematics lesson, pupils were consistently asked to describe carefully how they worked out their answers involving fractions. Positive relationships in lessons result in pupils being eager to contribute ideas. This was seen in a Year 6 English lesson where pupils reacted well to music and visual images, and confidently suggested varied vocabulary to describe their feelings. There is an improving picture regarding teaching quality, but some inconsistencies remain regarding the use of assessment and the degree to which pupils know their levels and targets, outside of literacy.

A good range of cultural and other visits, including those in the locality, such as to the Royal Naval dockyard help enhance the curriculum. A good selection of clubs and visits, including a residential trip, are offered and inevitably contribute to the personal and social development of pupils, including those in the DAU. The pupils enjoy the varied activities provided in the breakfast and after-school clubs. Girls and boys play indoor football while others rehearse their dancing skills. Pupils benefit when they can practise their basic skills in different subjects, but there is room for more such links if learning opportunities are to be maximised. Curriculum planning is satisfactory, but there are weaknesses in subject planning within some subjects, centred upon identifying how and when skills are to be developed and progressed across the school, for example in science.

There is good provision for the very complex needs of those pupils who find difficulties with learning. Those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those in the DAU, are well integrated, and benefit from good levels of support from teaching assistants. The school is not slow to seek the support of a wide range of external agencies to support and guide pupils. Good transition arrangements exist, particularly out of the Early Years Foundation Stage, and this ensures pupils settle quickly. While links with parents are positive the school has yet to gain the full support from the parents of those pupils who are regular non-attendees.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the Chair of the Governing Body have a clear and shared vision for school development. Leadership responsibilities have been satisfactorily shared among staff. This has been particularly effective in improving teaching. Leaders with particular coaching and teaching skills have been well utilised. They

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work effectively alongside other senior leaders to monitor teaching and use their mentoring skills to develop the quality of teaching. Hence the leadership and management of teaching and learning are good. ♦

Weaknesses remain at all levels in development planning. Monitoring by the governing body is not sufficiently focused on pupils' outcomes. Satisfactory policies exist although there are gaps in the cycle of sign-off by governors, which causes some delays. Safeguarding procedures are secure. The governing body is proactive in ensuring that staff, including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage, receive updated training, and they ensure that the necessary checks are made upon adults, including those in the nursery. The promotion of equality of opportunity is satisfactory. The school's secure tracking of pupils' progress ensures that the varied pupil groups are well monitored. Pupils from different backgrounds work and play harmoniously together. Equality of opportunity is seen when pupils are given varied opportunities to showcase their out-of-lesson skills, for example through the Rock Challenge.

Good partnerships benefit pupils well; the Community Improvement Partnership has led to improvements in the range of clubs as well as supporting the development of speech and language through the establishment of the school radio. The school has reviewed effectively its community cohesion work, and consequently knows its local area well. Early links have developed with a school in South Africa, but this has yet to develop to include challenging curriculum work for pupils. Links with another contrasting British school are embryonic. Partnerships with parents and carers are good. Workshops and Early Bird reading sessions take place that aid their understanding of how to support their child's learning, and the school, appropriately, is planning more.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

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## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter the nursery with well below the expected levels of skills and knowledge, and with particular weaknesses in aspects of literacy and numeracy. Progress and learning are satisfactory, and reflect the quality of teaching. Teachers' secure subject knowledge is demonstrated during whole-class question-and-answer sessions. The children have positive attitudes and want to learn.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is well managed, with many successful changes having taken place. Curriculum and lesson planning has been developed to ensure consistency over the entire stage, from nursery to Reception. Assessment and recording procedures have been improved and staff trained in their use. Effective monitoring and evaluation of these changes, together with staff mentoring, are conducted by leaders. It is also clear that the development of the 'Learning Journey' books is a very positive transformation. They contain evidence that allows adults, including parents/carers to clearly identify achievement and the next steps of the children's learning. There are still opportunities lost to further expand the evidence base, for example no camera was taken outdoors to record the children's reaction to the ice blocks. A leadership focus has been successful in improving the children's knowledge of learning sounds and letters. As a result of these changes introduced by management, the quality of teaching is better and assessment data show an improving picture regarding children's progress.

The 0 to 3 years provision meets the requirements of the Early Year's Register and is compliant with the registration requirements, for example regarding staff qualifications and adult-child ratios. It is well managed. The children benefit from good levels of care, with, for example, regular checks on babies taking place, and very appropriate recording carried out by staff. The environment is bright and stimulating with appropriate attention paid to health and hygiene matters. The children make satisfactory progress in their learning. There remain lost opportunities for staff to further develop the language skills of the children; the use of closed questioning or missed opportunities for appropriate adult intervention occur and this 'caps' the children's development of conversation. The children settle well as a result of positive relationships and an effective induction programme, including home visits. Through varied activities the children develop well their personal and social skills. They cooperated well in one outdoor session when organising and caring for a worm!

In the pre-school the children show enthusiasm upon arrival and know well the routines expected of them. They quickly seek out books and through using hand puppets two girls were seen to use their imagination well and develop some good language skills. Reception children make satisfactory progress in their knowledge of linking sounds and letters. In one session they were well motivated when asked to practise their sounds, and eagerly attempted to write words on their individual whiteboards.

Resources are accessible and the environment is clean, secure, bright and stimulating. The external areas give good opportunities for the children to play and learn outside. However, there are missed opportunities to promote numeracy and literacy in these areas. A satisfactory balance of adult-led and child-initiated learning opportunities exists, except for those children in the DAU with regard to the external area. In Reception and the pre-school the pace slows at the start of lessons as a consequence of some late morning arrivals and the consequent loss of concentration by children.

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*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

## Views of parents and carers

All parents who responded to the written questionnaire feel that they are happy with their child's experience at the school. They particularly feel that the school keeps their children safe, and inspectors agree. The large majority of parents strongly believe that the teaching is good. Inspectors judge teaching to be satisfactory overall, but acknowledge that it is an improving picture. A very few number of parents had concerns about whether the school takes notice of their concerns and suggestions. Inspectors judge links with parents to be good.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Portsdown Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 173 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 330 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	125	72	46	27	2	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	136	79	32	18	2	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	127	73	44	25	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	129	75	43	25	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	135	78	37	21	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	128	74	45	26	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	119	69	52	30	2	1	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	112	65	58	34	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	127	73	44	25	2	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	108	62	62	36	2	1	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	102	59	67	39	3	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	117	68	54	31	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	130	75	40	23	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



13 December 2010

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Portsdown Primary School, Portsmouth PO6 3JL**

You may remember our recent visit to your school. You were keen to tell us about your school – thank you. We listened carefully to what you told us. We believe yours is a satisfactory school. This means that it does some things very well and that there are other things it could do better.

We particularly liked that you told us you feel safe and that the adults look after you well. We agree that you get good care and that the school supports you well. You have a good knowledge of how to stay healthy. We also liked the way you show respect for each other, and that you behave well. You benefit from the good links that the school has with your parents/carers. Not all of you come to school as regularly as you might, and this means that you do not make the progress that others do. The school is working hard to help you to do this, and we have asked that they make it clear how important it is for you to attend regularly.

The school has good links with people outside of the school. These have led to improvements which have benefited all of you. For example, your radio helps you develop your speaking and listening skills. You told us how much you enjoy school, particularly the Friday Academy. We saw for ourselves how much the children in the nursery, the pre-school, and the breakfast and after-school clubs enjoy the various things they have to do. We have asked your teachers to give you more chance in lessons to solve problems and to make sure that all of the younger children have good opportunities for learning outdoors.

The adults are working hard to make things even better for you. We have asked that the teachers plan lessons for you that really challenge all of you. You can help by telling them when you believe the work is too hard or too easy. We have also asked them to make clear to you how you can improve your work. The adults responsible for subjects are making many changes. We would like them to look more closely at how these changes affect how well you are all doing and how they fit in with the overall plans made by the school. We have also asked that the governing body looks carefully at how well you are doing.

Thank you once again and I wish you all the very best for your future.

Yours sincerely

Michael Pye

Lead inspector

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