

Inspection of a good school: Portfield Primary Academy

St James Road, Chichester, West Sussex PO19 7HA

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 July 2021

Outcome

Portfield Primary Academy continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils in the mainstream classes and in the Special Support Centre for developmental language disorder really enjoy attending this inclusive school. Staff at the school know each pupil exceptionally well. Pupils know that the adults at school listen to them and keep them safe. Pupils say that bullying almost never happens and that arguments are rare. One pupil told inspectors, 'No pupil here is ever forgotten.'

Pupils understand the school values of respect, resilience, aspiration and care very well, as they are integrated into every aspect of school life. The 'Mountain Topper' programme helps pupils to connect what they learn in the classroom to their possible future lives, for example by meeting a robotics engineer. Pupils learn with a sense of purpose and enthusiasm.

All pupils know that staff expect them to work hard and behave well. Positive behaviours are celebrated and poor behaviour is never tolerated. Staff teach pupils the routines that they need to follow to be successful. Pupils told inspectors that behaviour was managed well at their school.

Parents appreciate the fact that staff know each pupil individually and celebrate their personal achievements. Parents told inspectors that the school communicates with them very well so that parents know, for example, what their child has done well on a particular day.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders and staff share a clear and ambitious vision for every pupil at Portfield Primary Academy. They have developed their 'aim high' curriculum to provide all pupils with a clear moral compass and to support pupils in becoming independent learners and

achieving well. Leaders have planned the curriculum to extend beyond the classroom and include a broad range of enriching and memorable experiences that bring learning to life. For example, pupils have regular opportunities to work with authors and poets.

Leaders have been working with teachers to set out the knowledge and skills that they want all pupils to learn in each subject. Much work has already been undertaken, particularly in art and physical education. In some subjects, such as history, this work is at an earlier stage. As a result, although pupils enjoy their learning in these subjects, the work does not always help them to learn and remember more. This wider curriculum development work is leaders' current focus.

The teaching of reading is a top priority. Phonics is taught well, right from the start. There are rigorous systems in place to ensure that early readers read books that help them to practise the sounds they have learned. Teachers expect pupils to read at home daily and staff monitor this carefully. If pupils are falling behind with their reading, this is quickly spotted, and these pupils receive additional support. As pupils become more fluent with their reading, they move on to a reading comprehension programme. Sometimes, teachers focus too much on teaching the skills of comprehension, when pupils need to learn more of the language within the text. In addition, as the wider curriculum is still being developed, pupils do not always have the knowledge they need to fully understand some of the more challenging books that they read.

In mathematics, leaders have adopted a well-constructed curriculum. This curriculum begins in Reception, where staff work with focus to develop children's knowledge of key number facts and an efficient and accurate method of counting through daily mathematics sessions. Teachers have been well trained so that they have good understanding of how to teach mathematics.

There is strong provision in place for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), both in the mainstream classes and in the Special Support Centre. Sensible adaptations are made to the planned curriculum for pupils with SEND. For example, in science, teachers carefully consider which parts of the curriculum pupils with developmental language disorder really need to remember. Expertise is shared between the Special Support Centre and the mainstream classrooms so that all staff are better able to meet the needs of pupils with SEND.

Low-level disruption no longer affects how effectively the curriculum is taught. All pupils, including those who had previously found it difficult to follow school rules, felt that the school's new behaviour approach was clear and fair.

Leaders engage extremely well with staff, including around staff workload. Leaders have involved staff in their curriculum development work right from the beginning so that staff understand this work. Staff appreciate how leaders work with them and value them. One staff member told inspectors that this was a school where leaders and staff had a strong shared vision for every child to do their best. They said this shared vision is what keeps staff at the school.

Leaders at the school feel well supported within the multi-academy trust (MAT). A trust-wide curriculum project has helped leaders and staff to develop their curriculum thinking and understanding. Support provided throughout the pandemic has enabled school leaders to stay focused on their improvement priorities.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders work with commitment and focus to keep pupils safe. Leaders support the whole family when they need to, so that families are in a better position to support their children. Leaders can do this effectively because they have an in-depth knowledge of each pupil and their circumstances. Leaders ensure that all staff have training so that they can recognise when there is a concern and raise that concern appropriately. Leaders ensure that pupils get the right help. Pupils told inspectors they felt safe and well cared for. They knew whom to talk to with any worries.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders must continue their curriculum development work, ensuring that all subjects across the wider curriculum are coherently planned and sequenced to ensure sufficient knowledge and skills for future learning and employment. A transition statement has been applied.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that a good school could now be better than good, or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in July 2016.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for published performance information about the school [here](#).

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	138402
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	10192844
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	208
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Gaenor Bagley
Headteacher	Andrew Strong
Website	http://www.portfield-tkat.org
Date of previous inspection	13 July 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher was appointed in September 2016.
- This school has a resourced provision for 16 pupils with speech, language and communication needs (a developmental language disorder) who have an education, health and care plan.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders, staff and pupils. They also spoke with the regional director and senior regional director of the Kemnal Academies Trust and the chair of the local governing board.
- Inspectors considered 30 responses to the confidential staff survey. They also took account of the 45 responses to Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire, and 46 free-text comments from parents.

- The inspectors did deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, art and history. These deep dives entailed discussion with the subject lead, lesson visits, work scrutiny, meeting with pupils and teachers and listening to pupils read.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors met with the leaders responsible for safeguarding. They reviewed safeguarding records and talked to pupils and staff. They checked the single central record.
- Inspectors reviewed documents, including the school's plans for improvement, attendance and behaviour records and minutes from the local governing board.

Inspection team

Alice Roberts, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Jo Lakey

Ofsted Inspector

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