

# Inspection of a good school: Portland Spencer Academy

Westwick Road, Bilborough, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire NG8 4HB

---

Inspection dates:

25 and 26 January 2022

## Outcome

Portland Spencer Academy continues to be a good school. There is enough evidence of improved performance to suggest that the school could be judged outstanding if the inspector were to carry out a section 5 inspection now. The school's next inspection will be a section 5 inspection.

## What is it like to attend this school?

At Portland, pupils do their best to live up to the 'Aspire' values of the school. They say that learning is important, and they are eager to learn. Pupils are proud of what they remember from previous lessons and want to learn more. Pupils work hard and enjoy the challenges that their teachers provide for them. Pupils of all ages love to share what they know. Leaders have high expectations of all pupils. They teach pupils that 'possibilities are endless'.

Pupils feel safe and happy in school. Pupils and staff are proud of the standard of behaviour in school. Skilled staff provide effective pastoral care and nurture. Pupils value their daily 'check-ins' with their teachers. Pupils say bullying is rare. Pupils know who to talk to if they had a problem. They value the 'worry monsters' which help them share their worries with adults. Leaders take pupils' bullying very seriously. The occasional incidents are addressed without delay.

Respectful relationships are evident across the school. Pupils support and encourage each other without being asked. Pupils show kindness by including others, especially pupils who are new to the school. Pupils say nobody is ever lonely, as they can go to the 'buddy bench' to find new friends.

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

Leaders have constructed an ambitious curriculum. In planning what pupils study, leaders take account of the needs of all pupils. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders aim to broaden pupils' experiences. This ensures pupils are well prepared for living in an ever-changing world. Leaders keep the curriculum under constant review. Even in the more recently developed subjects, such as design and technology, pupils' learning is considered carefully. The 'connected curriculum' allows

pupils to see the links between different subjects. Pupils revisit prior learning through the 'connect-back' daily lesson starters. This helps pupils know and remember more.

Leaders make clear to staff how to teach the different subjects. This results in an effective and consistent approach to teaching across the whole school. Teachers' subject knowledge is good because of the high-quality support they get from leaders. Teachers assess what pupils can do before introducing something new. Children in the early years thrive in the caring and nurturing setting. Early years staff work in collaboration with subject leaders in planning the curriculum. Children gain knowledge across all areas of their learning, preparing them well for the next stage of their education.

Early reading is particularly strong. From the early years, children learn phonics systematically. From the reading vending machine in the school entrance, to the recommended reads in classrooms, leaders show their commitment to developing pupils' love of reading. All staff receive high-quality training. This means they are well prepared to teach pupils how to read. Staff encourage pupils to read at home with books that match pupils' phonics knowledge. Pupils talk with enthusiasm about reading. They enjoy listening to their teachers read stories each day.

Teachers make effective use of assessment. This is particularly evident in mathematics. Pupils are challenged and moved quickly on as they grasp new learning. Pupils enjoy sharing their knowledge in their roles of 'tiny teachers'. All pupils, including those with SEND, learn how to think through a mathematical problem and explain their ideas.

Pupils remember their previous learning. This is because teachers know how to help pupils remember more of the knowledge they have been taught. For example, in history, pupils use graphic organisers to help them remember the key vocabulary for a topic.

Leaders have embedded the school's vision and rules throughout the school. These fit in with the school's strong 'Aspire' values. The rules 'be kind, be safe, be ready' are seen in action throughout the school. A strong sense of community exists where everyone looks after each other. Pupils celebrate the diversity of the school. One pupil told the inspector: 'It doesn't matter where you come from or what you look like, it is the personality that matters.'

Leaders ensure that trips and sporting and musical events widen pupils' experiences and raise aspirations. Pupils hold many positions of responsibility, including the pupil parliament and school council. Pupils contribute to decision-making to help leaders further improve the school.

Governors and senior members of The Spencer Academies Trust have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and priorities. They rigorously check on the school's performance. Staff's workload is monitored. All staff say they are well supported to manage their workload effectively.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils are kept safe because the central trust team makes sure that all of the proper checks are carried out. They make regular visits to the school to review the school's procedures. Procedures within the school are robust. Leaders and staff have undertaken extensive training to ensure they can identify and respond to concerns that pupils may be at risk. Staff report concerns promptly. Leaders work with a wide range of agencies to gain support for families. Staff care deeply for pupils and work with pupils to help them develop the confidence to share their concerns with an adult.

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

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The design and technology curriculum is being further developed and refined. Leaders should ensure that teachers think carefully through the teaching sequence so that all pupils are provided with interesting and engaging activities that will help to deepen their knowledge of the subject.

## 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, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, 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 deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in January 2017.

## 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 Ofsted 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.

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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	140550
<b>Local authority</b>	Nottingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	10212513
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	440
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Donna Kinderman
<b>Principal</b>	Kate Green (Executive Principal)
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.portlandspenceracademy.co.uk">www.portlandspenceracademy.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	12 and 13 January 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- There have been no relevant changes since the previous inspection.
- The school does not use an alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- During the inspection, the inspector met with the executive principal, the special educational needs and/or disabilities coordinator, the assistant headteachers, curriculum subject leaders, the early years leader and teachers from across all year groups. The inspector also met with the pastoral team.
- The inspector also met with members of the multi-academy trust and the chair of the local governing body.
- The inspector spoke with several groups of pupils to talk about their learning across the curriculum.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in the following subjects: reading, mathematics, and history. The inspector spoke with the leaders of these subjects.
- The inspector visited lessons, spoke with pupils and teachers, listened to pupils read and looked at pupils' work and documentation to understand the quality of education.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector reviewed school policies, procedures and records. The inspector spoke with the designated safeguarding lead. The inspector also spoke to staff, governors, members of the multi-academy trust and pupils about the school's approach to keeping pupils safe.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school.
- The inspector considered 23 responses to Ofsted Parent View, as well as 22 free-text comments. The inspector also considered the views of staff from meetings with groups of staff and from the 40 staff who responded to the confidential questionnaire. The inspector considered the views of 18 pupils who responded to the pupil questionnaire.

### **Inspection team**

Kirsty Norbury, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2022