

Inspection of a good school: Portway Junior School

Robincroft Road, Allestree, Derby, Derbyshire DE22 2GL

Inspection dates:

3 and 4 July 2023

Outcome

Portway Junior School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

The 'Portway 5' is a call to all pupils to be responsible, respectful, caring, friendly and active. They are all of these things. They have warm relationships with each other and with staff. They behave well in lessons and around school. As a result, the school has a friendly atmosphere, and pupils feel safe. Pupils and staff take great care in helping new pupils to settle.

Pupils are encouraged to do their best. Pupils rise to the challenge. They take pride in their work, especially the writing they produce in their 'publishing' books. Pupils enjoy choosing their best work to show parents at the 'proud moments' afternoons.

Chess, debating, gardening and basketball are among the wide range of clubs that pupils enjoy. They also value the many opportunities the school provides to enhance their learning, like forest school or visits to historical sites.

Parents value how approachable, supportive and caring staff are. One parent, typical of many, commented that this is 'a fabulous, warm and welcoming school, where my child thrives'.

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

Leaders have set a clear vision for the school: to create life-long learners who embrace learning about and celebrating the diversity of human achievement. They have designed a curriculum to achieve this through lessons, assemblies and wider experiences. They have thought carefully about the curriculum in each subject to ensure that pupils' learning builds step by step.

Leaders engage actively with educational research about what works well for pupils' learning. As a result, they have defined a clear approach to teaching the curriculum. For example, in mathematics, pupils practise daily calculations, which gives them confidence. In writing, they learn to draft, proofread and edit their work carefully. In reading, staff

teach pupils effective techniques to retrieve the important information from a text. Teachers make sure that they adapt their teaching to meet the needs of individual pupils. This means all pupils follow the same curriculum and achieve well. Teachers present new learning clearly and check pupils' understanding. They set demanding work for pupils who show they are ready. Leaders and teachers focus on developing pupils' vocabulary. Sometimes, they do not make sure that pupils understand all the key terms they need to be able to discuss or complete their work efficiently.

Leaders have established effective systems to identify and meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They make sure that staff receive training and advice about the best ways to support pupils in lessons. They work tenaciously with external agencies to secure the right support for pupils who need it.

Leaders promote reading. They have carefully chosen the texts pupils read in lessons. They want them to be interesting and to expose pupils to stories, people and places that broaden their cultural knowledge. Working alongside the pupils in the library club, leaders have developed the library. Pupils enjoy going here to read and to choose new books. Pupils who need help to improve their reading learn phonics. They catch up with their peers. They gain confidence and begin to enjoy reading again.

The school has a well-planned programme for personal, social and health education. Pupils learn about what makes a healthy relationship. They learn the language they need to talk about their emotions. This supports pupils to ask for help if they need it. Pupils receive high-quality pastoral support. Some pupils choose to go to 'the hub' at lunchtime. They like it because it is a quiet space.

School leaders value their partnership with colleagues in the trust. Trust leaders and governors provide the right balance of support and challenge to the school so that it continues to improve.

Staff enjoy working together in this happy school. They value leaders' support. They receive training that helps them to develop their practice for pupils' benefit.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Due to leaders' rigorous approach to staff training, there is a well-established culture of safeguarding at this school. Leaders are knowledgeable. Staff report any concerns they have about pupils' welfare. Leaders follow up on these concerns. They work effectively with parents and external agencies to support pupils. However, safeguarding records do not always reflect the actions they take.

Through lessons, assemblies and talks from visitors, pupils are taught to keep themselves safe online and in the community. Pupils learn what a healthy relationship is. They learn to use the roads safely.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Teachers do not always make sure that pupils understand important vocabulary. This is sometimes a barrier to pupils working efficiently or communicating clearly about their learning. Leaders must ensure that teachers consistently teach vocabulary explicitly and check pupils' understanding so that pupils can discuss and apply their learning fluently.
- Safeguarding records do not always reflect the actions leaders take to support pupils. It is not always clear if planned actions have happened or not. Leaders must ensure that safeguarding chronologies are complete so that they show the full extent of leaders' work with pupils, families and external agencies.

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 an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually, this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Portway Junior School, to be good in July 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.

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

Unique reference number	146879
Local authority	Derby
Inspection number	10268473
Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	349
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Jane Green
Headteacher	Emma Wilkinson
Website	www.portwayj.derby.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is part of Odyssey Collaborative Trust.
- The headteacher, deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher were all appointed to their substantive posts in September 2022.
- The school uses no 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 headteacher, the deputy headteacher, and other school leaders.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in English, mathematics and geography. For the deep dives, the inspector discussed the curriculum with leaders, visited lessons, looked at samples of pupils' work and spoke with teachers and pupils. She listened to pupils reading to a familiar adult.

- The inspector met with representatives from the trust, the board of trustees and the local governing board.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of the school's arrangements for safeguarding, the inspector reviewed school policies, procedures and a sample of records. She met with the designated safeguarding leads and spoke with staff, governors and pupils about the school's approach to keeping pupils safe.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school.
- The inspector spoke with some parents at the school and considered parents' responses to the Ofsted survey, Parent View.
- The inspector met with a range of staff and pupils during the inspection. She considered their responses to the staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Aoife Galletly, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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