

Inspection of a good school: Portway Infant School

Woodlands Road, Allestree, Derby, Derbyshire DE22 2HE

Inspection dates: 19 and 20 September 2023

Outcome

Portway Infant School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud of their warm and welcoming school. They appreciate the school's efforts to care for them and keep them safe. When they start school, pupils quickly learn the 'golden rules' and understand the importance of being, 'ready, respectful and safe'.

Pupils enjoy opportunities to choose books and read in their new library. They say that they are helped to learn to read and can describe stories they have enjoyed. Pupils particularly appreciate learning in the school's well-equipped forest school. Each week, they learn about the natural world and the weather, as well as enjoying art activities. Pupils value opportunities to learn from a broad and varied range of subjects, including learning to play musical instruments. Sometimes, pupils say that learning is too easy and that they are ready to move on to new learning sooner than they do.

There is a wide range of clubs and activities on offer. Pupils enjoy singing, gardening, crafting and football. They attend local competitions and performances with pupils from other schools. Members of the school council and eco-council work with others to ensure that the school is the best that it can be for all pupils.

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

Leaders have recently introduced a new phonics programme. Staff are well trained. They successfully help pupils to recognise and blend sounds. They show pupils how to form letters and support their early writing. Pupils are provided with books that match the sounds that they know. Pupils who need help to keep up receive additional support to develop their skills and confidence. However, information about the impact of these additional sessions is not always used well to make sure that pupils are becoming fluent readers.

Leaders are determined that pupils will develop a love of reading. The newly designed library provides pupils with a vibrant environment where they can read the books they choose. The school also works with parents and carers to promote the value of reading.

Staff share ideas for bedtime stories and provide opportunities for parents to observe phonics sessions.

There is a clear rationale for the choices the school has made when designing the curriculum for mathematics. Pupils access a range of resources to help them when they are learning. In early years, children use rhyme to understand number. Regular checks are made to confirm that pupils remember the intended learning. However, this information is not always used well to ensure that the learning activities are closely matched to pupils' needs.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are effectively supported by well-trained adults.

The history curriculum is well sequenced. Over time, pupils develop an understanding of monarchy, power and government. Sometimes, activities are not well matched to pupils' needs. There are missed opportunities to deepen pupils' knowledge. Pupils are not always clear about how historians work. The curriculum does not always include activities that enable pupils to understand how historical evidence helps them to learn about the past.

Pupils benefit from a rich programme of wider activities, including arts, sports and crafts designed to promote their personal development. The school provides pupils with opportunities to participate in local competitions and events. Pupils help their local community. For example, they have been invited to help with The Hedgehog Society. Pupils also go on trips and visits to places of local historical and geographical interest.

Staff are highly positive about the ways in which their workload is managed. They appreciate the time they are given to lead their subjects and the resources they can access to support their teaching. Staff report that they feel valued and enjoy the strong sense of community in the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some learning activities do not meet the needs of all pupils. They do not always deepen pupils' knowledge. The school should ensure that curriculum activities are well designed and provide pupils with opportunities to embed knowledge and develop skills.
- Pupils who require additional support are provided with well-chosen interventions. However, the details of this provision are not always clearly recorded, and it is sometimes difficult to assess the impact of this work over time. Leaders should ensure that staff regularly and clearly evaluate the effectiveness of provision, adjusting it where necessary.

- The school has not developed a clear system to assess how well pupils have learned the curriculum. This means that adaptations to the curriculum do not always respond precisely to information about what pupils know and can do. The school should develop appropriate assessment opportunities.

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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in December 2013.

How can I feedback 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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	112740
Local authority	Derby
Inspection number	10267967
Type of school	Infant
School category	Community school
Age range of pupils	5 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	161
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Catherine Smith
Headteacher	Lisa McSherry
Website	www.portwayi.derby.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	27 February 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not currently make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.

- The inspector met with senior leaders.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of their work.
- The inspector also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects, including art and design and design technology.

- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspector spoke with staff about their workload and well-being.
- The inspector considered responses to Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

Emma Hollis-Brown, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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