

# Inspection of Portsdown Primary School

Sundridge Close, Wymering, Cosham, Portsmouth, Hampshire PO6 3JL

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Inspection dates: 19 and 20 March 2024

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils are proud of their school. Some pupils face challenges in life and are supported well by the school because it creates an inclusive, safe culture. Pupils enjoy warm relationships with their caring staff. The school sets high expectations of pupils' behaviour. They are polite, welcoming and engage well during lessons.

Older pupils have not achieved well in English and mathematics in recent years. The school has taken determined action to address this. Pupils are now achieving better in reading and mathematics, although they remain less confident in writing.

Children make a strong start in early years. From nursery, children are well supported to gain confidence and independence. Children talk with delight about their newly hatched chicks and love their well-resourced environment, particularly the mud kitchen.

The school provides pupils with opportunities that help bring learning to life. Pupils go on trips, such as Portsmouth's historic dockyard. Older pupils relish taking on important roles such as sports leaders and school councillors. They know that these roles make a real difference to the school community because the school listens carefully to their views. Extra-curricular activities like the Makaton choir, dance and boys' and girls' football teams are extremely popular, helping to develop pupils' interests well.

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

The school has taken decisive action to improve the educational outcomes of its pupils. After the pandemic, key stage 2 pupils, in particular, fell behind. They did not achieve well as they should have in national tests. The school has made reading and mathematics a key priority, ensuring that staff are trained to teach these subjects well. Pupils' achievement is now strengthening, particularly, in key stage 1.

Across the wider subjects, the school has planned a broad and well-sequenced curriculum which rightly places high importance on developing pupils' vocabulary. In the most well-developed subjects such as art and design, the curriculum sets out precisely how pupils should develop their skills and understanding, using local artists and landmarks as inspiration.

Teachers plan well-structured lessons which enable pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to achieve well. In subjects such as computing, pupils with SEND are well supported to understand internet safety and to make wise choices over the use of apps.

Teachers routinely check that pupils have understood and address misconceptions. Most staff have strong subject knowledge and know how to deliver the curriculum effectively. A few staff, however, have less expertise. They do not always push pupils to answer fully, meaning pupils' learning can be more limited. Across nearly all

subjects, pupils show that they confidently remember their learning longer term. However, the school does not currently give pupils enough opportunities to write independently and meaningfully in subjects other than English.

Children in the early years, including those with SEND, develop their social skills thanks to strong and productive relationships with adults. Children learn to share and cooperate well. The school give the youngest children rich life experiences, such as travelling by train and meeting a police officer.

The school considers carefully how to develop pupils' enjoyment of reading, including making improvements to the library. Pupils read often and widely. Right from the start of nursery, children start to recognise letters and sounds. The school's phonics programme helps pupils to form and write words. Staff are trained regularly, and most, but not all, are confident to deliver the programme as intended. Disadvantaged pupils, including those with SEND gain increasing fluency and independence when reading.

Almost all pupils behave well and live up to the school's high expectations. Pupils with behavioural challenges and SEND are supported effectively by adults to understand their feelings and manage their own behaviour. Very occasionally, pupils use derogatory language. When this happens, the school acts immediately. It makes clear to pupils why it is not acceptable. In the past, too many pupils did not attend school regularly. Attendance has now risen, including for disadvantaged pupils, following effective actions taken by the school.

The school has designed a broad personal development curriculum. Pupils understand how to stay physically active and mentally healthy. The school's pastoral team provides helpful support to pupils who experience difficulties. Pupils are respectful of difference, including race and faith. They describe the school as a place of 'equality and fairness.' The school helps prepare pupils for life in modern Britain.

The school provides staff with a range of training that helps them improve in their roles. Staff are proud to work here. They appreciate school leaders' consideration of their workload and well-being. Governors give helpful support to 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)**

- There are inconsistent opportunities for pupils to write meaningfully and independently across wider subjects. This means that they are not able to routinely apply their writing skills in subjects other than English and do not have enough opportunities to further extend their writing practice. Leaders should

ensure that there are relevant and meaningful opportunities to write independently across subjects.

- A few staff are less experienced in terms of subject and pedagogical knowledge. This means that they do not deliver the intended curriculum as effectively as the strongest staff. Consequently, pupils do not achieve as well as they could. Leaders should continue to provide high-quality training to all staff to firmly embed the school's chosen pedagogical approach.

## 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](#)' 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	116258
<b>Local authority</b>	Portsmouth
<b>Inspection number</b>	10296223
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	433
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Andrew Starr
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ash Vaghela
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.portsdownprimary.co.uk">www.portsdownprimary.co.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	22 and 23 May 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Portsdown Primary is a maintained school within Portsmouth local authority.
- The headteacher has been in post since 2015.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.
- The school runs a before-school breakfast club. An after-school club is run by an external provider.
- The school runs a nursery for two- to four-year-olds.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.
- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The 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 school leaders, including the headteacher, other leaders and the special educational needs coordinator.
- The lead inspector spoke to a representative from Portsmouth local authority.
- The lead inspector met with four members of the local governing body, including the chair.
- Deep dives were carried out in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, computing, history and art and design. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also reviewed the curriculum more broadly in other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors 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 safeguarding culture that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspectors gathered evidence to explore the impact of pupils' behaviour and attendance, and the school's wider curriculum.
- Inspectors talked to pupils and staff throughout the inspection to gain their views about the school. This included the views of pupils and staff submitted via Ofsted's confidential surveys.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents, including the 19 responses given via Ofsted's confidential parent survey.

## Inspection team

Maria Roberts, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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