



Portchester School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 113869
LEA Bournemouth
Inspection number 279267
Inspection dates 22 February 2006 to 23 February 2006
Reporting inspector Victor Chivers HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Modern (non-selective)	School address	Harewood Avenue
School category	Community		Bournemouth
Age range of pupils	11 to 16		Dorset BH7 6NZ
Gender of pupils	Boys	Telephone number	01202 309841
Number on roll	967	Fax number	01202 399615
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Keith Mitchell
Date of previous inspection	8 November 1999	Headteacher	Mr Chivers Bradey

Age group 11 to 16	Inspection dates 22 February 2006 - 23 February 2006	Inspection number 279267
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Portchester School is an average-sized 11-16 secondary modern school for boys which has had specialist sports college status since 2004. The boys are drawn from both affluent and deprived areas and the overall level of social deprivation is average.

Most boys come from a White British background. The proportion with learning difficulties or disabilities is below the national average and the percentage with a statement of special educational need is well below. Average attainment on entry to the school is broadly in line with the level nationally.

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Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

The standard of education currently provided by the school is inadequate. The boys make insufficient progress during Years 10 and 11 and by the age of 16 standards and achievement, notably in mathematics, are significantly below expected levels. Whilst there are several areas where the school's practice is improving, these are not yet having a consistent impact on progress. The last inspection in 1999 identified a range of key issues which have all been addressed. Portchester is a caring school and boys' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The boys are encouraged to adopt healthy lifestyles and many make a good contribution to the school and the wider community. Teaching and learning, however, are inadequate. The quality of teaching is improving, but there are too many lessons where pace is slow, there is insufficient differentiation of tasks and teachers' expectations of the boys' capacity to achieve is too low. Assessment of the boys' progress is not conducted consistently across the school.

There are various aspects of the leadership and management of the school which are improving. Attention is more sharply focused on achieving greater consistency in teaching and on the boys' attainment and progress. The new senior leadership team has a strong focus on performance management. The governing body is effective, both in supporting the work of the school and in scrutinising poor performance. The school's analysis of the recent Year 11 'mock' examinations suggests that boys' achievements are now moving closer to the expected levels. All of these features point to the school having satisfactory capacity to implement the recommendations of this report and make further progress. However, in its self-evaluation, the school did not accept that the boys were making insufficient progress. Also, deployment of resources does not represent satisfactory value for money.

In accordance with section 13(3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to: 1) achievement and standards; 2) teaching and learning.

What the school should do to improve further

improve the boys' achievement and standards, especially at Key Stage 4, particularly in mathematics and in basic skills across the school eradicate unsatisfactory teaching and learning and improve the proportion that is good, paying particular attention to the development of challenging, engaging learning activities ensure the consistent use of assessment information and marking to improve teachers' planning and boys' learning and progress.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

The standards achieved by the boys at the end of Year 11 and the progress they make in Years 10 and 11 are inadequate. Boys enter the school with standards that are broadly average. The evidence from data, lesson observations and boys' work shows that they make satisfactory progress in Years 7 to 9 but unsatisfactory progress at Key Stage 4. Standards by the end of Year 9 are broadly in line with the national average. Standards at the end of Year 11 are below the national average, and are well below in mathematics. The proportion of boys obtaining five or more GCSE passes at grades A*-C and/or A*-G is below the school's own targets and well below the level nationally.

Current data and analysis of the recent 'mock' GCSE results indicate a considerable improvement in attainment for 2006, but overall standards still remain below national expectations. For many boys, this represents significant underachievement. However, boys who have been identified as having learning difficulties make satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Boys' personal development and well-being are satisfactory. Their moral and social development is good. There are good opportunities for the boys to develop social skills and to gain a good awareness and understanding of healthy lifestyles and citizenship. Specialist sports college status has increased the participation of many boys in sport and physical education. Attendance is satisfactory, albeit slightly below the national average.

The boys have a good understanding of right and wrong, but have limited opportunities for spiritual reflection, for example, in tutor-time. Many boys take good advantage of the range of opportunities for cultural development, for example, through their interest in the music of other cultures.

Behaviour in lessons and around the school is satisfactory. In sports-related activities and where lessons involve activity-based learning, boys demonstrate engagement and enjoyment. However, a significant number of lessons do not stimulate or motivate them enough. As a result, a substantial number of boys fail to acquire some important basic skills. Literacy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills develop satisfactorily, but progress in numeracy is inadequate, thereby impeding the boys' chances of success after leaving school. The boys' overall understanding of the workplace and the skills they will need is satisfactory.

Bullying is not a serious issue. When instances do occur, staff usually deal with them successfully in a fair and open way. The school council exercises considerable influence in the school, for example, in recently bringing about changes in the school's canteen arrangements and the quality and choice of food on offer.

The boys have many opportunities to develop responsibility and leadership skills as form captains, prefects, peer mentors, librarians and team leaders for the many sports

and leisure activities. They also contribute to the welfare of those in the wider community, for example, by organising fundraising for a wide range of charities.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

Although improving, the quality of teaching and learning is inadequate. Senior managers have an accurate picture of where teaching is strongest and weakest. Their well focused, robust actions are having a positive impact on its quality. Changes in teaching staff, relevant training and more effective subject leadership have each contributed to this improvement. The boys' achievement has begun to improve. Nevertheless, the teaching is not strong enough to eradicate underachievement. The school's monitoring has shown correctly that too much teaching is inadequate and that outstanding and good teaching occurs less frequently than in most other schools.

The boys have a strong preference for teaching that involves practical activity and the outstanding and good teaching provides this for them. This effective teaching enables the boys to make good progress as they rise to the teachers' suitably pitched, high expectations for academic achievement, work rate and conduct. In contrast, weaknesses in the inadequate teaching and in some of the satisfactory teaching inhibit the boys' progress. Poor starts to lessons, cursory lesson planning, a slow pace and low expectations often lead to the boys becoming inattentive and misbehaving. There is insufficient questioning or other evaluation to identify what boys do or do not know and the progress they are making during lessons. Too much of the work involves the boys listening to the teacher rather than engaging in sharply defined 'thinking and doing' activities of suitable duration. The needs of the more able boys or the special educational needs of others are not being met in these lessons.

Most boys know their targets and the best teaching makes clear what they need to do to achieve them. The quality of marking, however, is too varied. While some is regular, helpful and encouraging, other marking does not comment on poorly presented work and does not provide the boys with sufficient guidance on how to improve. The physical education (PE) department has a thorough assessment system whereby boys are involved in deciding how well they perform at the start, during and at the end of each cycle of lessons. They are always aware of what they can currently do and what they need to do to improve. There are other good examples but assessment is not consistent between or even within all departments. The school has begun to use data on progress to identify and support those who are not reaching their potential, but again the practice is not consistent.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum and other activities adequately meet the boys' needs. The curriculum at Key Stage 3 satisfactorily covers all the subjects of the National Curriculum and

drama. Boys with learning difficulties and disabilities have extra support to enable them to make progress.

The curriculum choices at Key Stage 4 include traditional GCSEs, a narrow range of GNVQ courses and a good variety of work-related college courses. Extended work experience and an alternative curriculum provided by the nearby special school are available for boys with behavioural difficulties. The choices within physical education (PE) include the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme and the Junior Sports Leader Award. The PE curriculum has recently been extended to include several new sports and is highly appreciated by the boys.

Boys from all years appreciate the wide range of clubs and activities provided out of school time. They almost all regularly attend at least one session and their enjoyment is obvious. A large number of sports fixtures, competitions, visiting speakers, trips and visits are also provided.

All boys choose and arrange their own placements for the two weeks' work experience at the start of Year 11. This has taken place for many years and evaluations by the boys and by employers indicate that it is a very useful taster of the world of work.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. The boys feel safe at school and value the Portchester community spirit. They feel comfortable in approaching teachers or peer mentors about concerns or worries. In addition, they make good use of a range of external support workers who provide counselling on issues such as drugs and alcohol abuse and other personal issues. However, tutor time is not well used by some tutors and does not contribute sufficiently well to the personal development of the boys.

Vulnerable boys and those with learning difficulties and disabilities are supported well through a range of tailored learning support programmes. The school works effectively with external agencies to support these boys. Sound procedures for child protection are in place and recent training has ensured that staff are kept up to date. Health and safety procedures are reviewed regularly and ensure a safe physical environment for the boys.

The boys make informed choices for the future through good quality careers guidance, visits to careers fairs and work experience.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The effectiveness of leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting the boys at the school is satisfactory. Despite the low standards and levels of achievement at the end of Key Stage 4, leadership is improving and has begun to affect positively the quality of teaching and the progress made by the boys. The new senior leadership team recognises that it has a broad agenda for improvement, but is

providing a clear sense of direction, which is helping to promote a good sense of purpose among staff. The performance indicators in the current school development plan are not sufficiently focused on the boys' outcomes, but this is being addressed in the new plan for 2006/07.

The systems for monitoring and evaluating the school's strategies and actions now have a sharper focus on the boys' achievement. The process of setting targets is becoming increasingly embedded in lessons and in the contributions made by faculties to the work of the school. Auditing and analysis of performance data have improved significantly over the last year. Attention is paid increasingly to identifying weak teaching and management. The school's self-assessment identified clearly those areas where the school needs to improve. In a few areas, however, it rated the school's performance too highly. Difficulty in recruiting staff is an impediment to raising standards, for example, in mathematics, but the school is working closely with the local authority to address this. The effectiveness of the school's leaders in promoting equality of opportunity and the personal development and well-being of all students is satisfactory. The school's strategies for promoting inclusion are effective in enabling many boys with potentially challenging behaviour to gain access to the full curriculum.

The governing body fulfils its role in both supporting and scrutinising the work of the school well. Governors have played a key role, for example, in challenging the performance of weaker curriculum areas, helping to review the school's behaviour policy and in celebrating the boys' achievements.

The school has a wide range of partnerships in place, many of which are helping to improve boys' experiences and raise their self-esteem. The senior leadership team has shown itself to be willing to seek and accept advice from a variety of agencies, including other schools. This is helping the school to challenge and improve its own practice. Sports college status has enabled the school to introduce many new ideas. Behaviour, attendance and punctuality have improved as less motivated boys begin to enjoy some of the new activities.

The great majority of parents are supportive of the school. A few commented on poor behaviour by a minority of boys, but recognise that the school mostly deals with this well. Weaknesses in communication with parents were also identified and the school accepts that this area merits further development.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	4	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	3	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	4	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	4	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	No
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

My team and I would like to thank you for your contributions to the recent inspection of your school. We enjoyed meeting some of you in discussion groups and also learned a great deal from talking to you, both in lessons and around the school.

Yours is a caring school and one which is improving. However, we do not think that currently you make enough progress, particularly in Years 10 and 11. We have therefore asked the headteacher, the governors and the staff to make further improvements. We want to see you achieve higher standards by the time you leave school and we think that you need more good teaching if this is to happen. At present, there are too many lessons in which the pace is too slow and teachers' expectations of what you can achieve are not high enough. Most of you prefer practical work, but some lessons do not provide you with this opportunity. Some aspects of your school are already good. As a sports college, you have many opportunities to develop your sporting talents and try out activities not available to boys in other schools. You have good opportunities to develop your social skills and to understand the importance of healthy lifestyles and citizenship. Your school council exercises considerable influence; for example, in helping to bring about changes in the school's canteen arrangements. There are many opportunities for you to develop leadership skills by becoming form captains, prefects, peer mentors, librarians and team leaders. Your charity and fundraising activities are particularly successful, enabling you to demonstrate your concern for people in need. You also appreciate the wide range of breakfast club and after-school activities, including sport, drama and music. It was good to see you cooperating well together and trying hard to improve your skills. If there are instances of bullying in the school, most of you feel these will be dealt with fairly. For some time now, your school has been working to improve your examination results. Teachers have been watching each other teach and trying to learn more about how they can help you. You have also been set targets in your various subjects to help you do your best. We think that you need more feedback on how well you are doing and when work is marked, it should make it clearer how you can improve. Your contribution will then be to make the improvements which the teachers suggest.