



# Portway Junior School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 112741  
**Local Authority** City of Derby  
**Inspection number** 289391  
**Inspection date** 8 February 2007  
**Reporting inspector** Glynn Storer

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Junior	<b>School address</b>	Robincroft Road
<b>School category</b>	Community		Allestree, Derby
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7-11		Derbyshire DE22 2GL
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01332 550113
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	298	<b>Fax number</b>	01332 541551
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Janet Short
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Alison Craig
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	12 November 2001		

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector in one day.

## Description of the school

This large junior school serves a socially advantaged area on the outskirts of Derby. The number of pupils eligible for a free school meal is very low. Most are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic heritages is half of that in schools nationally and hardly any speak English as an additional language. Pupils' attainment on entry to Year 3 is generally above that normally expected of seven-year-olds, although the number of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities, including those with statements of special educational need, is average for a school of this size. Since its last inspection, the school has gained Artsmark, Health Promoting Schools accreditation, Basic Skills Quality Mark 3 and the Investors in People award.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Portway Junior is a good school and some aspects of provision are outstanding. As one parent commented, '(my child) loves school and is eager to learn, because of all of the care given to creating an interesting curriculum, and the support that staff give to the pupils.'

Achievement is good. Standards are exceptionally high and have been consistently above average in recent years. Pupils make good progress and achieve well in relation to their attainment on entry to Year 3. Parents of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities are pleased with the good progress that their children make and their views are born out by inspection evidence. The school's success lies in a quality of teaching and learning that is almost always good and at times outstanding. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and response and of their ability to cope with demanding work. Teaching is both engaging and challenging and so brings out the best in pupils of all abilities.

Standards of personal development and well-being are outstanding. Pupils learn well because they enjoy school, behave extremely well and have positive attitudes. They are confident and keen to do their best. Levels of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are exceptional. A carefully planned programme of personal, social, health education and citizenship ensures the pupils adopt healthy and safe lifestyles effectively and make an excellent contribution to the school community. High standards of literacy and numeracy and good levels of competence in information and communication technology (ICT) lay extremely firm foundations for their lives as young adults.

The basic curriculum is good, and an excellent range of educational visits and visitors enhances teaching and promotes enjoyment in learning. Literacy and numeracy feature prominently and the school is, rightly, extending the use of ICT as an aid to pupils' learning. The school is currently involved in an exciting project aimed at bringing creative approaches to teaching and learning. This is appropriate because it has the potential to bring greater coherence to pupils' learning. However, this project needs a lot more work before its benefits will be seen in improved achievement across the curriculum as a whole.

The quality of care, guidance and support is outstanding. Levels of pastoral care are excellent. The staff and school's learning mentor respond swiftly to the needs and concerns of pupils and their families. They provide highly effective support and guidance to all, but especially to the school's most vulnerable pupils. There are good arrangements for guiding pupils on their academic performance and the school's formal procedures for safeguarding pupils are robust and fully meet current requirements.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and senior staff have high expectations of all who work at the school. Their committed approach builds morale and empowers staff at all levels to get involved and to make a real difference. As a result, self-evaluation is accurate and thorough. This, and incisive planning for school improvement, gives the school an enormous capacity for continued improvement and secures good value for money. Governors support the school satisfactorily. However,

they do not yet gather enough first-hand information to be fully effective in challenging the school about the quality of education that it provides.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Drive forward the creative curriculum project until it has its full impact in improving learning and achievement in all subjects.
- Give governors a more prominent monitoring role so that they are better able to hold the school to account for what it achieves.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Achievement is good and standards in all core subjects have been significantly above average for the last five years. In 2005, pupils' test scores represented good achievement in relation to their starting points in Year 3. Although standards remained high in 2006, pupils' achievement came out as satisfactory. This was because a number of able boys narrowly missed the above average writing scores that they were capable of. This reduced the combined scores for English and caused a dip in overall achievement, even though almost all made good progress in reading, mathematics and science, with more pupils than ever reaching above average levels in reading and science. Furthermore, several of the school's most able pupils actually attained standards normally expected of 12 and 13-year-olds, but such standards are not measured by the Key Stage 2 national tests. Inspection evidence and the schools detailed tracking confirms that pupils currently in Year 6 are also achieving well and are set to maintain the school's record of high standards.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Pupils really enjoy school and participate wholeheartedly. This reflects in consistently high rates of attendance. Pupils relate extremely well to staff and fellow pupils and so their behaviour in lessons and around school is excellent. By the time they leave school, most are confident and mature beyond their years. They show this in their conscientious working habits and by striving to succeed. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. They have good insights into human emotions and act on a clear understanding of what is right. They are well-informed about safe and healthy lifestyles and this reflects in the choices that they make, for example they choose healthy snacks from the school cake stall. By acting as school councillors, playground buddies and peer mediators, pupils make an outstanding contribution to the school community. Their very positive attitudes to learning and high level basic skills prepare them extremely well for secondary education, the world of work and for life in adult society.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. As one pupil put it, 'Teachers are kind, fair, helpful...and strict when they need to be.' This comment is testimony to the excellent relationships that exist between pupils and staff. Consequently, pupils are secure in their learning and readily rise to the challenges that teachers set for them. Pupils achieve well because teachers' expectations are high. They manage pupils' behaviour well, instil conscientious working habits and set work that is demanding enough to bring out the best in all. Teaching is generally lively and engaging and strategies such as 'talking partners', or the effective use of laptop computers, add considerably to pupils' good overall progress. Teaching is occasionally less effective when the teacher's subject knowledge is insecure. This results in confused messages and a slow pace of learning.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

The school provides a good curriculum. Its strength lies in the quality of opportunities offered to pupils. Hardly a term goes by without some special event to bring learning to life. Pupils speak enthusiastically about residential visits, visitors to school and on-going clubs such as journalism club and CC4G (Computer Club For Girls), which add enormously to pupils' enjoyment of school. Furthermore, this is a school that never stands still. Productive partnerships with neighbouring schools are bringing forward creative approaches to curriculum planning that will add further to the quality of pupils' learning. However, this work is at a very early stage of development and needs to be embedded more securely in order to have its full impact on standards and achievement. Staff modify the curriculum effectively to meet the needs of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities and for those capable of standards beyond those normally expected of 11-year-olds.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 1

Care guidance and support are outstanding. There are highly effective systems for monitoring pupils' welfare and staff respond swiftly to support vulnerable pupils. The school has its own learning mentor who deals sensitively and effectively with such matters and, together with staff and outside agencies, provides excellent support and guidance for pupils and their families. There are thorough arrangements for safeguarding pupils. Arrangements for protecting children from harm, for minimising risks and for ensuring the suitability of all adults who work with them are systematic and thorough. Guidance to pupils about their academic performance works extremely effectively in relation to literacy and is developing well with respect to numeracy.

Through the effective use of assessment, constructive marking and dialogue, teachers ensure that pupils know their targets and how to achieve them.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher is a highly able leader, whose commitment for the school 'rubs off' on all who work there. She has raised morale, developed a strong team spirit and motivated staff effectively. She has done this by giving them all a real part to play in school improvement by their participation in 'Inquiry Groups'. These groups are at the heart of the quality in this school because they are driving forward important initiatives such as the 'creative curriculum' and improvements to target-setting arrangements. Their increasingly effective role in monitoring and evaluating aspects of the school's work is also central to building consistency. This adds considerably to the overall quality of teaching and learning and gives the school an excellent capacity to improve further. Governors give satisfactory support to the school's managers. They are well-informed, but are not systematic enough in gathering first-hand information to be fully effective in holding the school to account for what it achieves.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1

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

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

09 February 2006

Dear Pupils

Portway Junior School, Robincroft Road, Allestree, Derby, Derbyshire, DE22 2GL

You may remember that I visited your school a little while ago. Thank you for making my visit so enjoyable and for taking time to talk to me and to answer my questions. I thought that you would like to hear what I found out about your school.

There are many good things happening in your school:

- Almost all of you make good progress in English, mathematics and science and reach high standards.
- You enjoy school because teachers, visitors and special events make learning interesting.
- You get on very well with one another and your behaviour is excellent.
- Your teachers and other adults help you when you have problems, make sure that you are safe and give you really good advice about your work.
- Mrs Craig, the staff, governors and pupils work hard to make the school a better place.

There are some things that could be even better. I have asked staff to press on with their plans to improve the curriculum, because I am sure that if they do, it will help you to do even better in all subjects. I have also asked the school governors to check more often on how well you are all doing and to ask Mrs Craig really tricky questions if they find anything that is not as good as it could possibly be.

I hope that you will all continue to work hard and do well.

Yours sincerely

Glynn Storer Lead Inspector