

# Porters Grange Primary School and Nursery

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	132792
<b>Local Authority</b>	SOUTHEND-ON-SEA LA
<b>Inspection number</b>	316016
<b>Inspection dates</b>	31 October –1 November 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Heather Weston HMI

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>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	460
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Samantha Richardson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Roselyne Ferdinand
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	17 March 2003
<b>School address</b>	Lancaster Gardens Southend-on-Sea Essex SS1 2NS
<b>Telephone number</b>	01702468047
<b>Fax number</b>	01702462512

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## Introduction

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

## Description of the school

Porters Grange Primary School and Nursery is much larger than most primary schools. The number of pupils taking free school meals is high and attainment on entry is very low. The number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is very high, with the majority learning English as an additional language. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is broadly average and the number with a statement of special educational need is below average. The school experiences a high level of pupil mobility.

The school has Investors in People status, a Healthy Schools Award (2005), Basic Skills Award and the Active Mark for physical education (PE).

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

The overall effectiveness of Porters Grange School is satisfactory. After the last inspection, the school went through a very difficult period when the leadership of the school had to deal with complex staffing issues and significant staff turbulence. Pupils' learning suffered as a result and standards fell to an extremely low level. However due to the determination and vision of the headteacher, pupils' education has improved significantly, particularly over the last year. The building has been refurbished and refurnished, and is now a stimulating and well-resourced environment in which to learn.

Pupils now make a good start in Foundation Stage, and by the time they join Year 1, they achieve standards closer to national expectations. In 2007, standards reached by pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 were well below average, and the proportion reaching higher levels fell in all subjects. Standards reached by pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2007, although still inadequate, rose significantly because Year 6 pupils made better than average progress. The progress made by current pupils throughout the school has improved. Overall, progress is satisfactory, although there is considerable variation between classes, and some more able pupils make less progress than could be expected. This is because there is considerable variation in the quality of teaching and learning. Nevertheless, all staff are focused strongly on putting these matters right and thereby accelerating progress, so standards match those expected nationally.

The curriculum is satisfactory, with growing strengths. Personal development and well-being are satisfactory. Appropriately, the school places a strong emphasis on the development of social skills and on promoting positive behaviour. The low standards of work mean that pupils' economic well-being is inadequate. Despite considerable efforts made by the school, levels of attendance and punctuality are inadequate, and this has a detrimental effect on pupils' learning. Care guidance and support are good, and well targeted. The school has a high proportion of pupils with diverse and complex needs. The very effective Children's Support Team has a pivotal role in supporting children with barriers to learning and works well with outside agencies. The words of a parent express it well, 'My child spoke no English when she arrived. Her progress, especially reading, is far beyond my expectations.'

Despite difficulties, the headteacher has been tenacious in pursuing improvement. She has been well supported by other senior leaders and in the last year, by the local authority, who recognised the school's need for help. Leadership and management are satisfactory, with clear structures and procedures in place, set out in very helpful working documents for all staff. Capacity to improve is good, and value for money is satisfactory.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 3

Adults settle pupils into school in a supportive, safe and well-organised environment. Staff work in close cooperation to support and guide pupils. Good behaviour, kindness and respect for others are encouraged well and pupils learn to share toys, experiences and ideas together. Less emphasis is given initially to developing independence until they are securely settled into school. The outside play areas for Nursery and Reception classes, although well provided with toys and equipment, are unattractive areas, and the limited range of activities restrict pupils' opportunities for learning. Teachers' planning and assessment take good account of individual

needs and all areas of learning are adequately covered. There is a good focus on improving language and communication skills and on social and emotional development. The leader of the Foundation Stage has good subject knowledge and a clear vision for what needs to be done to improve progress further.

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

- Raise standards throughout the school by addressing inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning, and improving the progress made by all pupils, including the more able.
- Improve punctuality and the level of attendance of pupils in order to improve progress.

### **Achievement and standards**

#### **Grade: 3**

Attainment on entry is significantly below national expectations. Pupils' speaking and listening skills, and emotional development are particularly low. Children now make good progress in the Foundation Stage.

Standards at Key Stage 1 have been well below average for 4 years. They rose in 2006, but fell again in 2007 to well below average. This was because, although standards in reading and mathematics were below average, standards in writing were significantly low for all groups of pupils. The proportion of pupils reaching higher levels in all subjects fell in 2007. Standards reached by pupils at the end of Key Stage 2, having fallen over a period of three years to an exceptionally low level, rose significantly in 2007, but remained well below average. Data shows that all pupils in Year 6 made better than expected progress in all subject areas, to reach very challenging targets. Results in all subjects were broadly similar, although more pupils achieved the higher Level 5 in science and mathematics than in English.

The progress made by current pupils is satisfactory overall, although there is significant variation between classes and year groups, with some pupils making insufficient progress. The progress made by pupils with English as an additional language and those with learning difficulties and disabilities is satisfactory. Rightly, the school has set highly challenging targets for all pupils throughout the school.

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

#### **Grade: 3**

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is satisfactory. Behaviour is satisfactory overall although it is often good in lessons and around the school demonstrating evidence of considerable recent improvements. A minority of pupils show challenging behaviour at times, but generally this is skilfully managed by staff. Pupils recognise that bullying and racist behaviour are unacceptable and, although these have not been completely eradicated, pupils know that any incidents will be dealt with promptly. Most pupils say school is usually enjoyable. However, attendance is well below the national average and because of this some pupils do not make as much progress as they could. The staff work hard with families to deal with this but, although there has recently been some improvement, absences remain high. Most pupils know about healthy lifestyles and more balanced school meals are helping them to choose the healthy option for snacks and lunches. Pupils respond enthusiastically when given opportunities to take responsibility, for example as class and playground monitors. Representatives from each class have some good ideas and suggestions to put to the re-formed school council.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Assessment information is used increasingly well to plan interesting lessons and identify those pupils who require additional support. Teachers work in effective partnerships with support staff both in class and in small groups. Class targets are clear and are used well to promote better progress for pupils. However, marking of work is variable and not always used rigorously to show pupils how to improve their work. Teaching is satisfactory but it is too inconsistent. For example, in the best lessons time is well used, the material presented to pupils is interesting, resulting in effective, enjoyable learning. In other lessons, the pace is too slow, there are low expectations of what pupils can achieve and tasks are not well explained, so pupils are easily distracted. Planning of work to provide suitable challenge for all pupils, including the more able, is also inconsistent, and results in uneven progress through the school. However, speaking and listening skills are effectively promoted in paired work with speaking partners.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The development of literacy has been prioritised and this strong emphasis on reading and writing is beginning to promote better progress in English. The focus upon the arts makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development and provides good opportunities to demonstrate their skills in art and music. French is taught in Years 3 to 6 and younger pupils now also have a chance to learn a foreign language. Increasingly staff are linking subjects in order to develop key skills. For example, in one lesson pupils planned instructions to help someone use Text Ease thus linking information and communication technology with literacy. The broad range of extra curricular activities including many after school clubs and the creative use of visits and visitors extends learning and promotes the well-being of pupils.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 2**

Staff provide good levels of care, support and guidance to ensure a safe and secure environment for learning. Pupils of all ages and almost all parents agree with this. Many pupils find learning difficult, are learning English as an additional language, or have emotional and social problems. The support they receive from teachers and learning support assistants makes an important contribution to their all-round development. Pupils appreciate this help, and one said that it was helping 'her mind to work in English.' Other initiatives run by the very well led and managed Children's Support Team include restorative justice, anger management and the quiet room. These demonstrate the school's commitment to address the specific needs of all pupils. Targets in literacy and numeracy are shared with parents and the imaginative displays of 'Target Island' help pupils throughout the school know what they need to do in order to improve. Procedures for child protection, safeguarding pupils and health and safety are effective and carried out conscientiously.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

The headteacher's main aim is 'Learning to learn for life'. She accepts no excuses for underachievement. This expectation is shared with all members of the school community and staff, governors and parents as well as pupils know the levels they are expected to reach. The School Improvement Plan is strategic, with suitable timescales. Actions are rightly focussed on raising standards and further developing pupils' personal development and well-being.

Leaders at all levels share responsibility for monitoring provision and improving performance. Leadership responsibilities are clearly established throughout the staff team. Performance management is used to help improve the quality of teaching in order to improve standards and all staff share the same targets relating to pupil outcomes. Careful training means that all leaders, including subject leaders, have the skills to carry out their roles. School self-evaluation now involves the whole school community. The structure of the governing body has been reviewed. They now form an enthusiastic team who have both supported and challenged the school during its difficulties. They are aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses and ensure that statutory responsibilities are met. They too have a strong focus on pupil achievement and are aware of their need for further training to support their monitoring role.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	4
The behaviour of learners	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	4

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

<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.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
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	3
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

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**Annex B**

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

2 November 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Porters Grange Primary School and Nursery, Southend-on-Sea SS1 2NS

We thoroughly enjoyed meeting you when we visited your school. Thank you for talking to us and showing us your work. We thought that you work well together in lessons and play well with each other. We know that you enjoy school and work well when your lessons are interesting and fun.

Your teachers and all the adults at your school work very hard to look after you well and to help you learn. Those of you who need extra support are particularly well looked after. Your headteacher has made sure that your school is a bright and cheerful place in which to learn.

We feel that there are some things that your headteacher and the other staff need to do to make sure that you all make as much progress as possible, including those of you who find work easy. They need to make sure that some of the teaching improves, so all lessons are as good as each other. They also need to make sure you all go to school regularly, and arrive on time. You and your parents can help with this, because missing school or arriving late slows your progress.

We send our best wishes to you all and hope that the things we have suggested will help you to make better progress.

With best wishes

Heather Weston HMI