

# Portishead Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	109074
<b>Local Authority</b>	North Somerset
<b>Inspection number</b>	324890
<b>Inspection dates</b>	24–25 March 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Robert Pyner HMI

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	415
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Michael Lockett
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mike Scriven
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 March 2006
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Station Road Portishead Portishead BS20 7DB
<b>Telephone number</b>	01275 843360
<b>Fax number</b>	01275 843360

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	24–25 March 2009
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## Introduction

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

## Description of the school

Portishead Primary is a large school situated in the town, which is within commuting distance of Bristol. The school has experienced significant growth in numbers over the last few years and the pupils reflect the mixed community it serves. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is lower than the national average, as is the percentage of children from minority ethnic groups or who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below the national figure.

The attainment of pupils on entry to the school in the Early Years Foundation Stage is broadly as expected for their age, but an above average proportion of pupils join the school in later years or partway through each year, reflecting the housing growth in the local community. During the current school year, the substantive headteacher is seconded to work for the local authority for three days each week and the deputy headteacher is working as co-headteacher, responsible for day-to-day leadership.

The school has achieved the Healthy School, Intermediate Level International School and Financial Management Standard in Schools awards.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

The school is good overall, but there are also aspects that are excellent. This comment is typical of the overwhelmingly positive views that parents have of the school: 'We are very pleased with the school. Our children are extremely happy. The staff and pupils are always friendly and happy to help each other. There is always a great atmosphere in the school. A fantastic foundation to their educational development.' The effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage, pupils' understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle, their enjoyment of their learning at school and their behaviour are all outstanding.

Not surprisingly, therefore, pupils progress well and, by the end of their time at the school, their achievement is good and improving. This improvement is based on the development of more effective tracking of the progress made by pupils and appropriate early intervention to support individuals and groups identified as underachieving. However, achievement across the school is not uniform. Children get off to an excellent start in the Early Years Foundation Stage, where they benefit from very high quality teaching and learning. This progress is not built on effectively as children move into Year 1 and, as a result, progress in Key Stage 1 falls to satisfactory levels. From Year 3 to Year 6, progress picks up pace again, and the most recent assessments for the end of Key Stage 2, not yet validated, showed significant improvement over 2007, with results at the nationally expected level that were well above average in English, mathematics and science. The results at the higher National Curriculum level in all three subjects were also impressive.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Although there is some variability, expectations in lessons are typically high, and practical activities are employed well to reinforce learning and make it fun. Relationships between staff and pupils are very good and this supports learning. Pupils are often encouraged to discuss their learning with talking partners and teachers so that the steps in learning are clearly understood.

The curriculum is broad and, overall, effectively matched to the needs of learners. Pupils enjoy the good range of practical activities built into their lessons and the range of extra-curricular opportunities available to them, which contribute well to their personal development. The school has audited the needs and opportunities of the community in order to develop cohesion and has established some positive links with local organisations, but the work on developing pupils' understanding of living in a multicultural society has been less effective. The school acknowledges this as an area of relative weakness in its provision. The level of care and support is excellent, and this is appreciated by parents. All staff know the pupils very well. The development of academic guidance over the last two years has been instrumental in the improvement in Year 6 results in 2008, although planning for the transition from the Early Years Foundation Stage to Year 1 remains the weakest aspect.

This year, the co-headteachers have built on their respective substantive roles, and worked as an effective partnership with a clear focus on raising achievement within a supportive and caring community. Throughout the school, teamwork is a strong feature, ensuring self-evaluation is accurate and used effectively to develop improvement planning. Subject leaders monitor standards and focus efforts on raising achievement effectively. School governance is good. The governors know the strengths and weaknesses of the school well and are fully involved in school improvement planning.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 1

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage classes make excellent progress in all six areas of learning, and reach high standards by the end of the year. Teaching that is consistently exciting and engaging enables children to learn very effectively and make outstanding progress. The indoor learning environment is vibrant and stimulating and this contributes significantly to learning. Planned activities are excellently matched and adapted to children's interests and aptitudes. There is a highly effective balance between activities led by adults and those initiated by the children. Children happily talk about the activities in which they are engaged, thoroughly enjoy their learning and say that it is fun. There are very clear routines for children, within which they make independent choices exceptionally well. Children's personal development and well-being are outstanding and their behaviour is exemplary. Despite some recent staffing changes, the well-established systems mean that the children have continued to make excellent progress and provision overall remains outstanding. During the absence of the Early Years Foundation Stage coordinator on maternity leave, staff have been very well supported by one of the co-headteachers and the Key Stage 1 coordinator. There is a clear vision for the development of the outdoor area to provide permanently positioned equipment and enhance further the opportunities for imaginative play and exploration.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that better use is made of assessment information to strengthen the transition from the Early Years Foundation Stage to Year 1, so that pupils' progress can be accelerated across Key Stage 1.
- Develop more effectively pupils' awareness and understanding of living in a multicultural society.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

The most recent assessments show standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1 to be above the national averages. At the end of Key Stage 2, standards were significantly above average in all subjects tested. In the assessments for Year 6 pupils in 2008, most gained at least the expected level in English, mathematics and science. The performance of the pupils in English was particularly strong. Results at the higher level were also significantly higher than average in all subjects. This represents a considerable improvement on results for 2007 and reflects the reward for the development of rigorous monitoring and targeted intervention for those pupils who are underachieving. Children make outstanding progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and reach levels significantly higher than expected by the time they reach Year 1. However, this strong progress is not continued consistently in that year group because teachers do not use assessment effectively to match appropriately challenging activities to learners' needs. As a result, by the end of Year 2, pupils' progress has slowed but remains satisfactory. From Year 3 through to Year 6, pupils make good progress, particularly in English. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress overall, reflecting careful support that is based on thorough monitoring of their ongoing learning needs.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

Children have very positive attitudes towards school and their attendance is good. They enjoy the positive work ethic encouraged by staff and the lively 'hands on' lessons. As one child said, 'We like it when our teachers make things fun.' Excellent relationships between staff and pupils result in the school being a very happy place. Pupils feel very safe and well cared for, confident that staff will help them to deal with anything that worries them. Behaviour is excellent and pupils are polite, well-mannered, caring and friendly so that bullying is a rare occurrence. Pupils are very clear about the difference between right and wrong. Pupils have an excellent awareness about the importance of a healthy diet and enjoy the sporting activities available at the school. They make a good contribution to the school as members of the school council, playground buddies and peer mediators. Members of the school council take their responsibilities very seriously and feel they make a real difference to the school environment by, for example, campaigning for play equipment to be used at breaktimes. This good personal development, along with pupils' progress in developing key skills in information and communication technology (ICT), literacy and numeracy, prepares them well for the next stage in their education and later life. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall, with strengths in moral and social aspects. However, cultural development requires further development. This is because not all pupils have a clear understanding of the different cultural groups that make up society and how they all have their different influences on life in Britain.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

During the inspection, lessons ranged in quality from satisfactory to outstanding. This is in line with the school's own records for the monitoring of teaching and learning. Teachers plan well in teams, helping to ensure that pupils in parallel classes work on similar activities. High expectations, good subject knowledge, very effective relationships, and questioning which assesses pupils' understanding and extends their learning are features of the good or better teaching observed. In many lessons, teachers set up activities with 'talking partners' where pupils discuss important aspects of their work to reinforce their understanding. Pupils work well on practical activities. An example of this was in a literacy lesson where pupils were encouraged to discuss in groups how the characters in the poem 'The Highwayman' would feel, with emphasis on exploring the language used to explain their views. In less successful lessons, the pace was slower, with fewer opportunities for pupils to undertake practical activities. Opportunities were also lost to use responses from the pupils to develop understanding. Teachers use teaching assistants well, often to work with pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to ensure that this group make the same good progress as their peers.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

The school's efforts to review and redesign the curriculum have brought about significant developments in provision which are driving up standards. Programmes of work are planned carefully to meet the needs and learning styles of pupils. These are enhanced by a good range of enrichment activities which include themed focus weeks such as the one which resulted in a Second World War exhibition during the inspection, the 'Everybody Writes' initiative, learning

French and Spanish, specialist sport and visits and visitors. These activities are well matched to ensure that they interest pupils and provide opportunities to develop practical learning. Consequently, pupils enjoy the activities and make progress. The provision for ICT is good, although stronger in some year groups than others. Pupils enjoy a good range of extra-curricular activities which include before- and after-school provision. Parents are kept well informed about what is taught in school by the publication of curriculum newsletters. Although the curriculum has been strengthened, most notably in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, the cultural elements of the curriculum are acknowledged by the school as areas for further development so that children have a better understanding of living in a multicultural society.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The school provides excellent pastoral care for the pupils. Staff are highly committed to developing pupils' independence and promoting their health and safety. Relationships with parents are good, with one parent commenting that 'the school strives to make sure every pupil matters and makes excellent provision to ensure that every child meets their full potential'. The school works well with outside agencies to provide good support for pupils with specific difficulties and/or disabilities. This work is guided well by the child support coordinator and learning mentor so that pupils themselves feel well cared for and encouraged. Statutory arrangements for the safeguarding of children are rigorous and child protection procedures are fully in place.

Academic guidance for pupils on how to improve their work is satisfactory but improving. Assessment systems have been developed over the last year and, where marking involves pupils, this is reflected in the good progress made in lessons. Pupils know their targets and what they must do to achieve them. Assessment information and the tracking of pupils' progress are mostly used effectively to set individual and group targets for improvement. The full impact is yet to be seen in terms of consistently raised achievement across the school, but these improved systems have already led to more secure arrangements for identifying pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and providing them with appropriate support. The weakest area of academic guidance relates to guidance and support for children entering Year 1. In particular, the good quality assessment data gathered in the Early Years Foundation Stage is not being taken sufficiently into account to provide pupils with consistently challenging activities that promote good progress.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The substantive headteacher and deputy headteacher have formed an effective partnership over the last two years, with the clear focus on raising achievement but ensuring that, as the school roll has increased, it retains its high level of care for individual pupils and support for their families. This is a school where every child does really matter. The success of this partnership can be seen in the continued progress made by the school as they have worked as co-headteachers since September. During this period, the leadership of the school has continued to develop, based on a revised vision statement and the restructure of the leadership team. The team have ensured that communication is clear in this large school and that all staff are involved in improvement planning. As a result, self-evaluation is extremely accurate and makes

a good contribution to school improvement. Consequently, the school has a good capacity to raise standards further and to set even more challenging targets for its future performance.

Subject leaders have a good understanding of their role and the school has developed an effective cycle for monitoring the progress made by pupils and the quality of teaching and learning. This has raised expectations and led to interventions where underachievement is detected. The impact of this work is beginning to be seen, particularly in the significant improvement in the Key Stage 2 assessment results last year, but has not yet had a clear impact on the results for Key Stage 1 pupils. School leaders have developed links with the local community and there are contacts with schools in The Netherlands, France and Spain. However, there is more work to be done in order to ensure that pupils have a clear understanding of living in a multicultural society. Consequently, the school's contribution to community cohesion is satisfactory. Governors hold the school to account well, offering both support and challenge, based on a good understanding of the school's work. They are developing their involvement further by improving the established links with subject coordinators and the senior leadership team.



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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?	2
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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

### Achievement and standards

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

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<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.

## Personal development and well-being

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

## The quality of provision

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

## 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	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
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	2
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

**Annex B**

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

26 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Portishead Primary School, Portishead BS20 7DB

Thank you so much for welcoming the inspection team to your school when we visited recently. We enjoyed our visit and I am writing to tell you about what we found.

Your school is good overall and there are some aspects that are outstanding. One of these is how well the children who start school in the Early Years Foundation Stage learn and make progress. You have an excellent understanding of healthy lifestyles and you behave very well. Many of you told us how much you enjoy school and particularly the practical activities that the staff plan for you. It was clear to us that your school is a very happy place to learn and play. I particularly enjoyed visiting your Second World War exhibition and seeing your carefully made models and thoughtful writing, some of which was the result of interviewing your own grandparents. These and other examples of your work on display were impressive.

All schools can improve and we have asked the co-headteachers, staff and governors to work on a couple of areas to improve your learning and achievement even further. The first is to make sure that the excellent progress that the children make in the Early Years Foundation Stage is built on in Key Stage 1 so that pupils make even more progress in their learning. We have also asked your teachers to help you to have a better understanding of the range of people from different cultures who make up our country and live in parts of Britain that are very different from Portishead. You can play a very important part in helping to improve your school even more by continuing to work hard and help each other. I am sure that you will.

Yours faithfully

Robert Pyner

Her Majesty's Inspector