

Portway Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112740
Local Authority	City of Derby
Inspection number	325673
Inspection dates	23–24 September 2008
Reporting inspector	Dorothy Bathgate 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.

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	209
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
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Johanne Totman
Headteacher	Miss Claire Walker
Date of previous school inspection	4 October 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Woodlands Road Allestree Derby Derbyshire DE22 2HE
Telephone number	01332 550702
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Age group	4–7
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Introduction

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

Description of the school

Portway Infant School is an average sized infant school. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals and the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are below the national average. There is no nursery provision. Children enter the Reception Year of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), with average levels of skill, knowledge and understanding. 'Cool Kids' breakfast and after-school club provision is managed by a private provider.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Portway Infant School is a good school with some outstanding features. It provides its pupils with a high level of care and good opportunities to learn and achieve to their full potential. The school is successful because it is extremely well led by the headteacher. Clear procedures for review, evaluation and development mean that there is a constant drive for improvement. The success of the school is reflected in the pupils' clear enjoyment of their work and play. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and are extremely positive about their children's experiences. They appreciate the warm and caring ethos which reflects the school's motto, 'learning, caring, sharing.' One wrote, for example, 'All staff work very hard to make the school a caring, happy and stimulating environment for the children.' This is supported by the findings of the inspection and the school provides good value for money. The school promotes community cohesion and supports pupils well through highly effective links with other schools in the extended schools cluster, as well as its current involvement in the 'Hope 2008 Community Action in Allestree' project.

When children enter the Reception year, they have a wide range of skills, knowledge and understanding. Although in line with those expected overall, their skills in numbers as labels, and for counting, are well above those expected. They make good progress in all areas of learning so that by the time they start Year 1, most children have achieved the standards expected and some have exceeded them. In Years 1 and 2, children continue to make good progress. By the time they leave the school, children reach standards that are consistently above average, so their achievement is good. Pupils who find learning more difficult make outstanding progress because of the high quality support they receive.

Teachers work very hard to plan consistently effective, high quality lessons and activities that match all pupils' needs and learning styles. Consequently, teaching and learning are consistently good. However, in the EYFS teachers do not maximise the use of the outdoor environment as effectively as possible. Pupils are happy in school because enjoyment of learning is given a high priority. The broad and balanced curriculum, combined with high quality teaching, mean that learning is exciting and consequently behaviour is excellent. The school has identified a need to further improve and maximise the use of cross-curricular links to further inspire and motivate children. Pupils get on well with each other and enjoy taking responsibility. All children are made to feel safe and secure. The school works very well with other agencies and maintains an exemplary partnership with parents, which effectively enhances the children's well-being and achievement. The school's investment in a trim trail and its 'Park and Stride' initiative, confirm the success of its excellent work in promoting and developing healthy lifestyles. All children are encouraged to respect and value themselves and to make the most of their individual talents and skills in preparation for future learning and adult life.

The significant improvements made since the last inspection can be attributed to the single-minded commitment of an established team of teaching staff and senior management team. There is clear evidence of good capacity to build on the school's strengths.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage is good because of the effective work of the staff and the good progress made by the children. Induction arrangements are excellent and adapted

carefully to individual needs. Parents report that they are well informed and that staff are friendly and approachable. Children settle quickly and feel safe and happy. Provision is well matched to need in the EYFS and children receive consistently good teaching because teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of how young children learn through play. There is a strong focus on the teaching of phonics as well as excellent use of 'Write Dance', which make a significant contribution to children's good progress in early literacy skills. Personal development is also given a strong and successful emphasis. Consequently, the majority of children make good gains and meet or exceed the early learning goals at the end of the Reception year. Reception classes are stimulating and challenging places to learn and thorough planning ensures children have equal access to all areas of learning. However, the outdoor area does not provide the same level of challenge or stimulation. The school is aware that this is an area of the EYFS needing further development. The temporary EYFS team leader is providing good leadership.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the outside learning environment in the EYFS is as challenging and stimulating as the children's indoor classrooms.
- Improve and maximise the use of cross-curricular links to further inspire and motivate children.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement and standards are good. The good progress made in the Foundation Stage continues throughout Years 1 and 2. At the end of Key Stage 1, standards in all the core subjects are above national averages and this has been a consistent trend over recent years. Evidence of these high standards was seen in a Year 2 lesson where children were able to describe a character's point of view through very successful role-play activities. The high standards reached in all core subjects are a direct result of the challenging targets for improvement which are set and the high expectations of all staff. The school is successfully addressing the gender issue with boys at the higher levels in reading and writing. Results of teacher assessments in 2008 indicate that the gap has narrowed significantly.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Personal development and well-being are outstanding because of exceptionally high levels of care. Children have excellent attitudes to learning, take great pride in their work and display an enthusiasm for learning. Their good literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills, as well as their outstanding independent skills and high levels of respect for each other, ensure that children are extremely well prepared for the next stage in their education. Pupils are constantly encouraged to be honest, to take turns, to share and to care for each other. Consequently, behaviour is excellent both in the classroom and outside in the playground. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good overall, though moral and social development are stronger than spiritual and cultural. Pupils have an excellent understanding of what it means to be healthy. Through their pupil voice, they have successfully influenced the decision to increase their weekly physical education time. Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the community through their charity work. A notable feature is the strong link with a Romanian orphanage through 'Cry in the Dark'. The pupils' on-going commitment to this charity provides excellent opportunities for them to see the results of their

fund raising and the difference it makes to other children's lives. They enjoy opportunities to take on responsibilities, for example as members of the school council and ECO monitors.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. The calm and supportive manner in which teachers manage the pupils and organise their tasks is a consistent and dominant feature of teaching throughout the school. As a result of this important strength, pupils feel secure and work conscientiously. In most classes, there is an atmosphere of high expectation where pupils are fully engaged with their learning, enjoy stimulating activities and make good progress. There is a high priority on learning for a purpose and this prepares pupils well for future adult life. Classroom assistants make an important contribution to lessons by providing effective levels of support to those pupils who find learning more difficult and those needing extra support and care. Consequently, these pupils make outstanding progress. Assessment is used very effectively to plan tasks that are well matched to individual needs and interests.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and many additional activities add interest and enjoyment to lessons. The majority of pupils take part in an appropriate range of extra-curricular activities. The effective use of letters and sounds has successfully raised standards in reading throughout the school. Good use is made of educational visits and visitors to provide a starting point for learning and to provide first-hand experiences from which pupils see the relevance of their learning to life. The curriculum provided offers pupils good opportunities to learn the skills necessary for their future education and lives after school. The school is beginning to establish links between different subjects. However, these remain at an early stage of development and pupils have insufficient opportunities to maximise their learning through cross-curricular links.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. Parents speak highly of every aspect of the school's work and are delighted with the excellent care, guidance and support provided. Child protection procedures are in place and risk assessments are thorough. Pupils say that they feel safe because they know that they can go to adults or other pupils if they need help. They are particularly positive about improvements to the playground such as the trim trail, as well as initiatives to support children who may be lonely or worried. All pupils achieve well because of the excellent use of assessment information to carefully plan activities that meet their individual learning needs and to set challenging targets. There are many excellent opportunities for parents to become involved in family learning through workshops and coffee mornings. Parents commented positively on the high quality information they receive to help them support their children with reading, phonics, numeracy and story sacks. These reflect the school's belief that parental support has a significant impact on achievement.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The school's success is underpinned by the excellent leadership of the headteacher, which ensures that there is a shared vision and educational direction for the work of the school. The school is constantly looking to improve and innovate, and there is no hint of complacency in its work. Subject leaders provide strong leadership in their areas and play a significant role in helping to improve teaching and learning, and raising standards. The governance of the school is good and governors offer excellent levels of support and challenge. They share in the school's clear vision not only for itself but also for its developing work with other local schools through the extended school cluster programme. The high standards now achieved consistently over time, together with the strong leadership and the improvements made since the last inspection, show that the school has good capacity to maintain the high quality of its work and to continue improving further.

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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?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ 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	1

¹Grade 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

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
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	2
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	1
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

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	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?	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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?	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	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**

25 September 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Portway Infant School, Allestree, Derby, DE22 2HE

Thank you very much for making me so welcome when I visited your school recently. I had a great time and just like you, I think your school is a happy and exciting place in which to learn.

It was so good to see you all enjoying your learning and wanting to learn more. You are taught by good teachers who want you to achieve high standards. You are to be congratulated on the good progress you make and the above average standards you achieve. I was particularly pleased to see some exciting 'Write Dance' work where some of the Reception children were enjoying making marks to music. Some of the other Reception children were choosing colours and materials very carefully for their life-size portrait, whilst others were creating a wonderful autumn collage from natural materials they had collected locally. I also enjoyed listening to the Year 2 children re-telling the story of 'Can't You Sleep Little Bear' through role play and I just wished I could have had a candle to hold to transform me into the little bear character! Those of you who sometimes find learning a bit difficult are extremely well supported by teaching assistants. Your behaviour is excellent both in lessons and in the playground. All the staff and governors take good care of you and you are also good at caring for each other. You told me how much you enjoy your trim trail in the playground and understand that exercise, as well as fruit and vegetable snacks, are good for your growing bodies.

You are developing good literacy and numeracy skills that will help you as you grow into adults. However, you don't have sufficient opportunities to use these in other subjects, or to use skills learned in other subjects in your literacy and numeracy lessons. Your teachers will be trying different ways of helping you to do this. You can help too by practising all your skills in as many different ways as possible, at school and at home. Although the children in the Reception classes enjoy some outdoor play, it is not always as exciting or challenging as it could be. Your teachers will be trying to improve this for you.

Your parents are rightly pleased that you attend such a good school. Keep up all the good work and always remember to do your best. Thank you again for making my visit such a happy one!

Dorothy Bathgate

Her Majesty's Inspector