

Portway Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112741
Local Authority	Derby
Inspection number	338004
Inspection dates	30 June –1 July 2010
Reporting inspector	Lois Furness

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	283
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Claire Brown
Headteacher	Jason Pass
Date of previous school inspection	8 February 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Twenty-three lessons were visited, and 11 teachers observed. Meetings were held with staff, the Chair of the Governing Body, groups of pupils and parents and carers. School documentation, including the school improvement plan, monitoring and evaluation reports, assessment records, pupils' work, safeguarding documentation and the recent reports of the School Improvement Partner were scrutinised. In total, 117 parents' and carers' questionnaires were analysed. The team also analysed 100 responses to the Key Stage 2 pupil survey, and 21 responses to the staff questionnaire.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the impact of the leaders' work on raising attainment in English, especially in writing
- how well teachers use assessment information to ensure lessons match pupils' needs and the extent to which pupils are involved in their learning
- how rigorously, over time, the governing body has questioned the leadership about pupils' progress.

Information about the school

In this larger than average junior school, most pupils are of White British heritage. The number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average but the proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is below average. In January 2010, a new headteacher was appointed following a term when leadership was provided by the senior management team. The school has attained a number of awards including Healthy Schools status, and Artsmark gold.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Overall effectiveness is satisfactory. Pupils enter school in Year 3 with attainment that is above average. Their progress is satisfactory and, at the end of Year 6, attainment remains above average. A strength in pupils' attainment is mathematics, which has been high over the last three years. However, in English, attainment has been declining and attainment in writing has not been as high as in reading. Although this year there is evidence that attainment is rising in English, the gap between reading and writing remains. Assessment information shows that pupils in all year groups do not consistently make the progress of which they are capable. The use of this information is not rigorous enough to ensure that tasks, especially in writing, closely match what pupils need to learn to attain higher levels. Although groups of pupils have regular guided reading sessions, focused writing sessions are not a strong feature of lessons. Pupils are given targets for improvement and marking is conscientious. However, targets are not always relevant. They are rarely referred to in lessons, or in pupils' books. There is some good practice in the use of oral and written feedback, but marking does not consistently inform pupils of the good features of their work, or of how to improve. Expectations of pupils' presentation of work, and of handwriting, are not high enough.

Teaching is satisfactory overall. Good features were seen in almost all lessons. Relationships are good, as is behaviour, and pupils want to learn. Good enjoyment is evidenced by pupils' well above average attendance. Pupils feel safe in school and have an outstanding understanding of how to keep safe. Pupils answer questions willingly, and staff are starting to use different strategies to involve pupils more. 'Talk partners' are proving successful as pupils share ideas and learn from each other. However, at times pupils are too passive, and the overuse of worksheets means pupils do not have the opportunity to use their initiative to plan and organise their own learning. The learning intended in the lesson is usually shared but teachers do not explain why this learning is important, or of how to succeed.

The new headteacher has quickly gained the respect of governors, staff and pupils. Comments such as, 'We are impressed with the new head' and 'The new head is approachable and always listens', indicate how positively parents and carers regard the new appointment. Self-evaluation is mainly accurate, and leaders have a secure knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses. A school improvement plan is being produced which is focused correctly on raising attainment in English and in accelerating pupils' progress. However, it is not clear how leaders, including governors, can evaluate the impact of any actions taken. Existing management systems, although satisfactory, are not sharp enough. For example, tracking and target setting systems do not enable the leadership to accurately track progress, nor identify quickly if any pattern

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of underachievement is developing. Meetings take place to discuss pupils' progress. However, these have not been effective in ensuring the consistently good progress of pupils, especially in English. Staff are not held fully accountable for the progress of pupils. Even so, the drive and determination of the new headteacher, the willingness of staff to try new ideas, and the maintaining of high attainment in mathematics alongside the improving trend in English attainment show the school has satisfactory capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate pupils' progress in English, especially in writing, by ensuring:
 - assessment information is used rigorously to plan tasks that match closely to the range of ability within the class
 - teachers have higher expectations of pupils' presentation and of their handwriting
 - oral and written feedback are linked closely to the intended learning in the lesson, providing pupils with clear guidance about how to succeed and how to improve their work
- Increase pupils' involvement in their learning by:
 - teachers consistently sharing with pupils the purpose of the lesson, the intended learning and how they can achieve success
 - providing pupils with more opportunities to plan and organise their own learning
 - making target setting more responsive to pupils' needs.
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
 - the school improvement plan having measurable success criteria which leaders, including the governing body, can use to evaluate the impact of the actions taken
 - refining the tracking and target setting system so underachievement is quickly and efficiently identified
 - using meetings to check pupils' progress, swiftly taking any necessary action, and holding staff accountable for the progress of the pupils.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Pupils enjoy school. They work hard in lessons, concentrate well and listen to their teachers and their peers carefully. At times, progress is good as was seen in a Year 6 mathematics lesson when pupils worked together in groups deciding upon how to make the most profit when marketing a drink to sell at the school fair. In Year 3 also, good

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progress was made as pupils explored the relationship between multiplication and division. However, when considered alongside pupils' work over time, especially in writing, and the school's tracking data, achievement overall is satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar progress to their peers, and there is no significant difference in attainment between boys and girls.

Pupils are polite, helpful and considerate and they make a considerable contribution to the calm ethos in school. They feel extremely safe and say there is very little bullying. They are very knowledgeable about the importance of road, water and fire safety, and speak sensibly about the dangers of the internet. They value each other's opinions and have a good sense of right and wrong. Almost all eat sensibly and take plenty of exercise. They enjoy the 'activate' exercise sessions during lessons and assemblies, and say these help with their concentration. Most pupils take up the many opportunities to take responsibility such as monitors, buddies and peer mediators. The school council is active and contributes effectively to the running of the school. Those who are not themselves school councillors, consider it an important voice. Good 'workplace' skills such as punctuality and cooperation are developing well. Pupils follow admirably the school's dictum, 'sport' - sticking at, positive about, organised, reflective learner, team player. They have competent basic skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology, but they do not have enough opportunities in lessons to show initiative in developing learning activities for themselves.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The curriculum provides pupils with interesting learning opportunities. Cross-curricular activities help them to make connections in their learning, which considerably enhance their understanding of different subjects. For example, Tudor life is made real by links with the theatre. Music, art and information and communication technology are used well to enhance learning. Writing weeks and visitors, such as different authors, have added interest in the written word. However, these initiatives to enhance pupils' writing skills have not as yet had the impact on progress that was anticipated. Teachers' planning does not clearly identify the specific learning intended for different ability groups, so not all pupils make the progress they should. The planning is better in mathematics than in English. Assessment information is not used consistently well enough to ensure activities are the right ones for all. Teachers are enthusiastic and prepare their lessons thoroughly. However, at times, there is too much teacher-talk and, although pupils sit quietly listening in these lessons, the pace of learning slows and is only satisfactory.

Parents and carers appreciate the good quality care, guidance and support their children receive. Pupils agree they feel safe and well supported, valuing the work of the learning mentor. The support and pastoral guidance for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who may be vulnerable is good. Early diagnosis ensures that appropriate actions are taken to enable these pupils to play a full part in school life. Transition arrangements for pupils moving to secondary school are clear, and the school regularly provides parents and carers with information about how they can support their child's learning.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

In this inclusive school, equal opportunities are promoted appropriately, although pupils

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do not consistently make good progress throughout the school. The new headteacher has successfully inspired governors and staff with the strong determination to eradicate any underachievement. Staff appreciate the changes being made and morale is high. However, there has been insufficient time for the improvements implemented to notably influence pupils' learning and progress. Governors have a good range of skills which they use well. Statutory responsibilities are met, including measures to ensure pupils are effectively safeguarded. A strength of this is pupils' involvement in safeguarding procedures and their strong understanding of how to keep themselves safe. Governors have started to gather evidence of performance for themselves, but over time they have not consistently challenged the senior leadership, or held it to account for its work in ensuring pupils make the progress they should.

The good partnership with a range of different agencies helps to improve pupils' education. For example, involvement in a local cluster of schools extends the range of activities available. These include musical activities, family learning courses and the breakfast and after-school clubs. The effectiveness of the school's work in the promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory. Good links with the local community and other schools, including another Derby school which serves a more culturally and ethnically diverse community, help pupils to learn about communities different to their own. As yet, the school does not clearly evaluate the impact of its work on pupils' understanding of community cohesion and links with communities nationally and globally are not as secure. Parents and carers hold positive views of school as shown by their responses to the inspection questionnaire.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

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Views of parents and carers

Almost all parents and carers say they are happy with their children's experience at Portway Junior School. They appreciate that their children enjoy school and are kept safe. In addition, they think the school helps their children to lead a healthy life style and are well-prepared for the next stage of education. The inspection findings support these positive views. However, the inspection findings also support the very small minority of negative responses regarding pupils' progress and the quality of teaching, both of which could be better. Parents and carers say the school is well led and managed. Inspectors agree that the new headteacher and senior leaders and governors are working closely together to improve provision. However, there has been insufficient time for changes to make a full impact on pupils' learning and their progress.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Portway Junior School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 117 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 283 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	55	47	56	48	4	3	2	2
The school keeps my child safe	61	52	55	47	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	27	23	80	68	7	6	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	39	33	65	56	8	7	3	3
The teaching is good at this school	45	38	64	55	4	3	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	33	28	73	62	6	5	2	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	40	34	75	64	0	0	1	1
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	43	37	68	58	3	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	34	29	73	62	5	4	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	34	29	74	63	9	8	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	27	23	78	67	9	8	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	39	33	76	65	2	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	56	48	56	48	2	2	2	2

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



2 July 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Portway Junior School, Derby, DE22 2GL

Thank you very much for your friendliness and help during our visit to your school. We really enjoyed talking to you and seeing your work. Those of you who spoke to us were very helpful and we appreciated you giving up your time to talk to us. We were very impressed by your politeness, and the way you get on with your teachers and with each other. We know from talking to you and reading your questionnaires that you enjoy school and being with your friends. We were pleased to find out you feel safe in school and you have an excellent understanding of how to keep safe. Your attendance is well above that found in most schools. Well done! We were also pleased to see how you accept responsibility and are willing to do jobs and help around the school. Your behaviour is good and, in lessons, it was good to see how carefully you listened to your teachers, and tried hard to do your work.

You go to a satisfactory school. This means that there are things that it does well, but also there are things that could be better. Your headteacher agrees, and these are the things that will improve your school. Your attainment is above that found in most schools especially in mathematics. However, you could attain higher in English especially in writing. You would make faster progress if your teachers used information more carefully about what you know already, and gave you clear advice about how to make your work better. We noted in your questionnaire returns that many of you said you did not know how well you were doing in your work. You need to have more opportunities to think for yourselves, in deciding what you need to learn and how to plan and organise your work. We found that using worksheets prevents you from using your initiative - this means using your own ideas. We have asked school leaders to make sharper some of the things they do so they can check you are all learning as well as you can.

Thank you again for your help. You can now help by remembering to set out your work neatly and, by using your best handwriting when recording your ideas. We hope you continue to enjoy school and wish you all every future success.

Yours sincerely

Lois Furness

Lead inspector

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