

# Portway Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	131846
<b>Local Authority</b>	Newham
<b>Inspection number</b>	341232
<b>Inspection dates</b>	13–14 July 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Kevin Hodge

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 of pupils on the school roll</b>	618
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Marilyn Basra
<b>Headteacher</b>	Maggie Van Loan
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	20 June 2007
<b>School address</b>	Stratford Road London E13 0JW
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. They observed 30 lessons taught by 22 staff. They observed the school's work, including lessons, before- and after-school clubs, playtimes, lunchtimes and two assemblies. They looked at planning, monitoring information, information sent to parents and carers, and a range of pupils' work. Inspectors met with staff, pupils, members of the governing body and spoke by telephone with a colleague who is involved with the local school's consortium. They also looked at 70 questionnaires returned by parents and carers and 16 completed by staff. Results of the school's recent survey of pupils' views were also taken into consideration.

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

- how well children achieve in the Early Years Foundation Stage, particularly in their language and number work
- if recent rises in test results for pupils in Years 1 to 6 are reflected in their day-to-day attainment and progress
- how well the school supports vulnerable and minority groups
- how senior leaders use self-evaluation to inform their judgements about the school's performance.

## Information about the school

This much bigger than average-sized school serves a culturally diverse community. Most pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds with pupils of Black African and Asian Bangladeshi backgrounds making up the largest groups. More than half of the pupils are from homes where English is not the first language. All pupils in the school are entitled to a free school meal due to a recent government initiative. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average, as is the number with a statement of special educational needs. The largest groups are pupils with speech, language, behavioural, emotional or social difficulties. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a Nursery and three Reception classes. The school has received a number of awards reflecting its commitment to teaching basic skills, active lifestyles and the arts, and it has Investors in People status.

**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?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

Portway is a good school. The outstanding levels of care, guidance and support the school provides for pupils mean they play and socialise together very well despite their differing backgrounds and beliefs. Excellent levels of partnerships with others beyond the school mean pupils are highly knowledgeable about their local area, are tolerant of others' beliefs and backgrounds, and vulnerable pupils especially benefit from high levels of care and support.

Children have a smooth start to their school life in the well-organised Nursery, where they learn and play together well. This continues through the Reception classes where their creative, social and physical abilities improve quickly, but their writing, reading and number skills lag behind when they start Year 1 as they are often very low when they start school. In Years 1 to 6, pupils generally make good progress, although this is sometimes uneven between classes or year groups. By the time they reach Year 6, pupils achieve well and reach broadly average levels in their writing, speaking, listening and number skills. Pupils' information and communication technology (ICT) skills are better than expected for their age. Pupils' scientific investigational skills are not promoted effectively, although they have a sound knowledge of scientific principles.

Pupils say they feel extremely safe in the school and the secure site and 'zoned' playgrounds help in this respect. They behave well and sometimes brilliantly around the school, particularly when they serve lunch or sell fruit at playtimes. Relationships are very harmonious, aided by the good levels of pupils' understanding and tolerance of others. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to keep healthy and talk excitedly about how their home grown produce finds its way in to the school kitchen. Pupils like their lessons and say teachers try to make them fun. This is not surprising as most lessons are usually well taught, although the quality sometimes varies between classes or year groups and pupils' progress varies as a result. The broad curriculum provides well for aspects such as ICT skills and modern foreign languages, and there is good range of extra-curricular clubs. Work to make the curriculum more inventive and rigorous in promoting skills in subjects such as history and geography, and in linking subjects together more meaningfully, has been partly successful. The school recognises this is not yet a consistently good feature for every class or year group.

☐ Underpinning the success of the school is good teamwork by senior staff, led effectively by the headteacher and governing body. Not content with the status quo, staff and the governing body want the school to be even better and use effective self-evaluation routines which encompass the views of staff, parents, carers and close analysis to identify any groups in danger of underachieving. The excellent partnerships with others beyond school boost its already highly effective levels of care. Given their

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success in maintaining the school's performance and improving results, the school has good capacity to improve further.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality and consistency of teaching and pupils' progress in the 2010/2011 academic year by:
  - ensuring that more able pupils are stretched in their learning
  - ensuring that the school's marking policy is consistently applied in every class.
- Extend the quality of the curriculum by:
  - planning more investigational activities in science-based work
  - giving children in the Reception classes more opportunities to plan and choose work for themselves
  - ensuring that activities are planned which help pupils know about others' lives in different parts of the United Kingdom.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**2**

Pupils enjoy attending the school and achieve well. As some said at playtime, 'We love everything.' Their empathy towards others and willingness to respect others' beliefs, prompted by good levels of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are key reasons why relationships are so good. Their local awareness of others is good, but their knowledge of others from contrasting backgrounds further from the school in this country is not as secure. Pupils' good attitudes often helps their learning in classes and they respond well to new ideas. For example, Year 6 pupils enjoyed their work preparing to design a computer-based movie to illustrate some of their writing, while pupils in a Year 2 number-based lesson gained a good understanding of subtracting numbers as they listened intently to the teacher. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because of good support, often aided by well-briefed teaching assistants and specialist teachers. Those at the early stages of learning English as an additional language also make good progress because they are identified clearly and support is targeted effectively. Past national tests and the school's own information highlight clearly where some groups of pupils, such as boys, make slower progress. However, recent initiatives to enliven boys' interests such as comic strip writing are helping to reduce differences in attainment between boys and girls. In mathematics, setting by ability is helping pupils make secure progress. The school council enjoy their role and keep a watchful eye on others, and say that classmates 'don't tolerate bullying'. Their contribution in local partnerships has been excellent and representing the school in Newham's Children's Parliament has helped raise their sense of value to the community. Pupils' excellent awareness of healthy living is aided by a 'Let's get cooking' club, breakfast club and high levels of activity in the playground. Pupils say they enjoy selling fruit at playtimes and are hopeful of also preparing it themselves one day too! Combined with their secure levels of basic skills, these responsibilities, along with others such as

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being 'eco' and recycling monitors, help prepare them well for later life.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective is the provision?

Pupils' appreciation of their teachers and the approach they adopt are well-founded for the majority of lessons and activities. ICT is a particular area where pupils are confident, and many pupils have individual laptops so these skills can be incorporated well into their day-to-day work. Teachers promote good relationships between pupils and classes are rarely disrupted. The aims of lessons are usually shared with pupils and activities are usually pitched at the right level for most to make good progress. This works best for those of middle ability and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, but is not so successful for □ pupils of higher ability as they are not always fully stretched in their learning. They are often set work at the same level or starting point as classmates. Teachers use interactive whiteboards well to enliven lessons with pictures, sounds or to record pupils' ideas. In a very well taught lesson in Year 6, pupils enjoyed being helped in identifying how to achieve higher levels in their scientific understanding with clear guidance about what they had to do to be successful. The majority of teachers' marking

<sup>1</sup> 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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is regular and points to what pupils need to do to improve, but the new policy is not consistently implemented in all classes. The teachers and pupils appreciate the ability to plan more interesting topics such as 'Shrek' and 'Matilda', and the corridor 'museum' displays boost interest in topics on offer or being studied. This works well in promoting key skills, although it does not always provide so well for promoting skills systematically in other subjects such as science, history or geography. Extensions to the curriculum such as learning modern foreign languages, developing design skills with a local company and enrichment afternoons where pupils can try their hand at sewing or photography are good.

□ The school's excellent partnerships with outside providers, specialists and local schools help the school provide high quality care and guidance. This shows in high quality relationships, the tolerance pupils show to others and the high levels of support given to pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This includes nurture groups, the behaviour support team, regular multi-agency meetings held at the school and very effective links with local police officers. The excellent partnerships with local schools help boost this aspect of the school's work such as helping to provide family support workers. Parents and carers voice appreciation for this aspect of the school's work and, as one said, 'They help with all aspects of my child's learning.'

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The senior leaders work together effectively as a team, led by the headteacher who has a clear vision for the school's direction and its place within the community. The headteacher, supported skilfully by senior leaders, has harnessed the expertise of staff within the school to take on initiatives such as sustainability projects and in developing excellent links with others beyond the school to drive improvement. Involvement with local 'E13' learning initiatives, to develop work in multi-media, sports activities and London City airport to raise pupils' awareness of commerce, all contribute to pupils' good and improving levels of well-being. Staff use a good range of evidence to inform their self-evaluation routines and to generate a sensible range of priorities such as seeking to improve the curriculum from good to excellent. Most parents and carers responded positively to the inspection questionnaire, and only a small proportion overall pointed to ways things could be improved. The governing body supports the school well, visits regularly and ensures that safeguarding routines are good. The vetting of staff is

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of a particularly high standard. Their own review of routines has highlighted aspects to improve, such as fully updating governors' roles and committee structures so they can be even better informed.□ □□

□ The school ensures equal opportunities for pupils and discrimination is not tolerated as the school works extremely hard to monitor, record and remedy any issues. Racist incidents are very rare and reflect the pupils' excellent tolerance of each other's beliefs. The school's promotion of community cohesion is very good in this respect as the school community is harmonious. Links with schools in Australia and France help promote global understanding, but community cohesion falls just short of outstanding as pupils' understanding of different communities represented in the wider United Kingdom is not as secure as their very good local knowledge and awareness.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children start in the Nursery with abilities that are below expectations for three-year-olds. They settle well and make a very good start to their learning and they become more confident to play with others. Children really enjoy activities like rolling out dough before carefully cutting out their 'gingerbread man' shapes. Their welfare needs are met well and simple routines like hand washing are well catered for. In the Reception classes, children continue this good progress for the most part, particularly in their social and physical development, aided by extensive outdoor equipment which they use well. In communication, language and literacy, they make up ground quickly in gaining skills. This represents good progress given their low starting points, but despite



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this pace of progress, do not fully meet average levels when they start Year 1. Some children show good levels of concentration, such as when painting or modelling and when they identified two dimensional and three dimensional shapes during their 'brain' gym activities. While they are happy, secure and very confident, children do not always have enough opportunities to make their own choices about the resources they would like to use. Teaching assistants provide timely support, particularly in ensuring children's welfare needs and in supervising activities, although they are not always as good at extending children's learning. In outside activities, they take good account of ensuring children use large apparatus safely. Assessment of children's learning is good and information gathered shows them and their parents and carers evidence of the good progress they make in Reception. Partnerships with parents and carers are very good, as are links with pre-school providers, and the leadership of this part of the school is good.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

**Views of parents and carers**

Parents and carers who returned the inspection questionnaire indicated their positive agreement in most areas. Those that added comments indicated areas that they felt could be improved and also provided positive comments. Several of the areas mentioned for improvement related to parents' and carers' individual experiences and had no common theme to their concerns. The two areas with a common link were the progress that pupils make and also some parents and carers thought that they could feel more involved in what goes on. The inspectors found that indeed some pupils' progress did vary and slowed in some year groups or classes on occasions. They cannot endorse a view that the school is resistant to parental help, but the school has the normal reservations that all have about ensuring the sustainability and consistency of help and the requirement to maintain good safeguarding routines. That said, the school is currently seeking ways of harnessing the support that some parents and carers are offering to help improve the school's provision.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Portway Primary 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 70 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 618 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	53	76	16	23	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	43	61	26	37	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	33	47	35	50	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	32	46	32	46	4	6	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	37	53	31	44	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	28	40	35	50	5	7	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	31	44	35	50	2	3	0	0
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)	29	41	33	47	1	1	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	31	44	31	44	7	10	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	37	53	27	39	0	0	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	21	30	36	51	5	7	3	4
The school is led and managed effectively	32	46	31	44	5	7	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	41	59	25	36	4	6	0	0

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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	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](http://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"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
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.**



15 July 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Portway Primary School, Plaistow E13 0JW

Many thanks for your welcome recently when we visited your school. We think yours is a good school and we are confident that you enjoy the range of things you can do which help your learning. Here are some particular things we found out:

- you make good progress in your learning and your attainment in many subjects, especially the important ones of English and mathematics, is around the expected levels
- your computer-based skills develop well
- behaviour is good and you told us you enjoy lessons
- the school makes excellent links with other organisations and schools to help you learn
- you know lots about keeping healthy and 'well done!' for growing your own vegetables
- you all feel extremely safe in school and when you are away from the school
- those who lead and manage your school are determined to keep on improving it so it can get even better the school cares for you exceptionally well, particularly those who find learning hard.

We have asked the school to try and improve in a couple of areas to help it get even better:

- to make all lessons as good as the best so that you make good or even better progress through the school
- to improve the curriculum even more by planning better activities for science and other subjects like geography and history to make learning even better.

You can help too by continuing to be well-behaved and in giving your ideas about how the school can keep on improving.

Yours sincerely

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