

# Portsdown Primary School

Sundridge Close, Wymering, Cosham, Portsmouth, Hampshire PO6 3JL

## Inspection dates

22–23 May 2018

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Outstanding</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- Inclusion lies at the heart of this good school. Leaders and governors have created an ethos focused on enabling all pupils to succeed.
- A purposeful atmosphere pervades the school, underpinned by warm relationships between staff, pupils and parents.
- The senior leadership team, with the support of governors and strong middle leaders, has successfully led improvements to teaching and the curriculum. This has resulted in improved rates of progress across the school.
- Outstanding provision in the early years enables children to make rapid progress from low starting points. Children quickly develop a thirst for learning due to the very effective teaching and the extremely appealing indoor and outdoor areas.
- The inclusion centre is managed very well. It provides effective specialist support for pupils who find difficulty in communicating and interacting.
- The effective teaching of phonics (letters and the sound they represent) means that pupils typically make a good start in developing their literacy skills. However, some find difficulty in using phonics skills fluently as they read unfamiliar words.
- Teachers generally keep a close eye on pupils' progress, although they occasionally move on to new work before checking all pupils have grasped key ideas.
- Pupils behave well and have positive attitudes to learning. Their attendance is improving due to the effective work of the pastoral team, reinforced by the engaging curriculum. Pupils respond enthusiastically to the motivating and challenging teaching.
- Parents greatly value the school's outstanding attention to their children's personal, social, and emotional well-being. They know their children feel valued and safe.
- Leaders and governors know the school's strengths and weaknesses. However, development plans do not typically include specific criteria to enable the success of initiatives to be fully evaluated.

## **Full report**

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

- Improve the fluency of pupils' reading in Years 1 and 2 by increasing their speed in applying their phonics skills as they come across unfamiliar words.
- Ensure that teachers check pupils' understanding of what has been taught before introducing something new.
- Include specific outcomes in development plans so that the success of initiatives can be evaluated.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher has successfully led the school through a period of considerable change. Staffing is now stable, and this is contributing significantly to pupils' improving progress.
- A review of the school's values initiated by the headteacher has helped to establish a strong team spirit and common sense of purpose. The attitudes of staff and pupils reflect the school's motto, 'Grow, Care, Succeed'. A member of the pastoral team remarked, 'The head puts the child at the centre. Their emotional well-being is key.'
- In the three years since his appointment, the headteacher has brought about a wide range of improvements to the accommodation, facilities and resources. Many areas of the school have been refurbished to provide comfortable, welcoming, and stimulating areas for learning. Notable among the improvements are the extensive outdoor learning areas in the early years section. Pupils were very appreciative of the improvements.
- Senior leaders and subject coordinators have high expectations for all pupils. They have considerable subject expertise and, in their own teaching, provide excellent role models for colleagues. Their determination to ensure every pupil succeeds is evident in the enhancement of the quality of teaching and pupils' improving progress.
- Leaders regularly check the quality of teaching. They encourage staff to share strategies that work and arrange additional training when required. School leaders record and analyse pupils' progress meticulously and look at pupils' work. This provides a clear picture of how well different groups are getting on, including those who are disadvantaged and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities.
- Development plans set out what leaders want to improve and what actions they intend to take. They are typically not precise about how the impact of the initiatives is to be evaluated. For example, the expected rise in pupils' attainment is not linked to any robust evaluation of the impact of initiatives. This lack of evaluation limits leaders' ability to find out what works and what does not, in order to refine subsequent planning and ensure that their efforts have been worthwhile.
- Leaders have successfully led improvements to the curriculum. Links between subjects are effective. Pupils have good opportunities to practise, consolidate and extend their writing skills across the curriculum. For example, pupils wrote expressively about the effect of plastics in the oceans and explained how micro-beads enter the food chain. Subjects such as science, computing, and art include aspects of mathematics.
- A wide range of enrichment activities stimulates pupils' interest and engagement and supports their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Visits to local forts, castles and historic dockyards bring history alive. Pupils studying crime and punishment visited the Tower of London, for example. Leaders report that pupils are becoming more open-minded following visits relating to their studies of Hinduism, Christianity, Sikhism, Buddhism and Judaism. Pupils are gaining a sound understanding of the values that underpin British life. When discussing democracy, their comments included, 'Without democracy, things would happen that aren't fair,' and 'We won't always agree, but we've had a say.'
- Leaders' unswerving commitment to inclusion is evident in their attention to ensuring

that disadvantaged pupils, who make up half of the school's roll, do as well as possible. Leaders track their progress carefully and regularly review the impact of the pupil premium funding. For example, a recent review found that new 'literacy conferencing' is leading to positive outcomes in English. Targeted support has improved the attendance and behaviour of disadvantaged pupils.

- The sports premium is used to good effect. Outside sports coaches provide high-quality learning experiences for pupils, and useful insights into effective teaching techniques for staff. The range of clubs, decided in consultation with pupils, is extensive. Pupils spoke highly of the opportunities provided by the 'rock challenge', for example.
- Parents are positive about the way the school has improved. Among the strengths they identified are the 'strong bond' between home and school, the high level of care, and the way any concerns are dealt with promptly. Anxieties raised by a few parents were explored by inspectors who found that individual concerns were not prevalent across the parent group.
- Representatives of the local authority acknowledged that the support for school leadership had previously been constrained by a reduction in the service they could offer. More recently, leaders have benefited from external guidance arranged through the local authority.

## **Governance of the school**

- The governing body includes several new members. Governors took part in the recent review of the school's values and are fully committed to them. Governors are aware of their role in holding leaders to account. The minutes of governors' meetings include increasing examples of governors seeking further clarification from leaders. For example, they recently asked pertinent questions about the predicted end-of-year outcomes for children in Reception.
- Governors understand the links between the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. However, they acknowledge that current development plans lack precise targets to help them check whether the resources allocated to the pursuit of particular goals give value for money.
- Governors are increasingly taking up opportunities for training. For example, members have participated recently in training in the analysis of assessment data and the safe recruitment of staff.
- Governors share leaders' commitment to inclusion and keep informed about the impact of additional funding, including the pupil premium and sports funding.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- School leaders, supported by a strong pastoral team, have established a culture and ethos around safeguarding and keeping children safe. Relationships between leaders, staff, pupils and parents underpin the school's commitment to providing a safe environment for all.
- The three designated safeguarding leads help to ensure full adherence to the school's

safeguarding and child protection policies. Staff are kept up to date with annual training in keeping children safe in education, the 'Prevent' duty and online safety.

- Appointments are made following safer recruitment guidance. New staff receive comprehensive safeguarding training on arrival at the school.
- Links with outside agencies are well established and effective. Potential risks are assessed before any external visits by pupils.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

**Good**

- Pupils' improving progress is due, not least, to consistently effective teaching which engages and challenges pupils. Pupils enjoy learning, take pride in their work and persevere.
- Teachers take care to establish pupils' starting points and structure lessons to increase pupils' knowledge, deepen their understanding and increase their skills. This is evident, for example, in the way pupils acquire phonic skills and develop increasing confidence in using them in reading and writing. Similarly, pupils respond well to the challenge of instantly recalling number facts as they tackle mathematical problems.
- Using their secure subject knowledge, teachers pitch work with an appropriate level of challenge for different groups. They provide useful oral and written feedback which helps pupils to see how they can improve. The most able pupils respond to the challenge of gaining deeper insights that reinforce and enhance their understanding and skills. Occasionally, however, teachers move on to more demanding tasks before checking that the less confident pupils have a firm grasp of the key ideas that have been covered.
- Pupils across the school are inquisitive and try hard. They respond positively to the challenging texts used in English, and routinely consult a dictionary or thesaurus as they are working. Pupils said that practical apparatus helped their learning in mathematics. For the most part, pupils make every effort to present their work neatly. They were keen to show their fluent handwriting and well-presented work in mathematics.
- Staff in the inclusion centre and the main school share ideas and best practice. This contributes to the effective provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- Teaching assistants are deployed effectively. They are well briefed and use their initiative as they support individual pupils or small groups. They use questions effectively, following the example of teachers to elicit pupils' understanding and move their learning forward.

### **Personal development, behaviour and welfare**

**Good**

#### **Personal development and welfare**

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- The pastoral team provides excellent support for pupils and their families. The inclusion manager, learning mentors, family support workers and attendance officer work closely together. They are dedicated and highly committed to supporting families within the

community. Their tenacious approach has improved parental engagement and has a very positive impact on pupils' attitudes to school.

- Members of the pastoral team regularly help families in practical ways, such as driving children to appointments and helping parents transport their children to school. Staff regularly help families during holidays and weekends, for example by accompanying parents to meetings. A breakfast club provides a safe haven for around 40 pupils each morning.
- Weekly meetings enable close liaison between pastoral staff and class teachers. The coordinator for children who are looked after knows them and their carers very well. The level of care these pupils receive is highly personalised and based on their specific needs.
- Parents, many of whom face challenging circumstances, much appreciate the attention to their children's welfare. One commented, 'My child, who previously found school too overwhelming, is now thriving thanks to the care and effort of the staff.' Another remarked, 'The door is always open, and they follow up any issues very quickly.'

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Parents, pupils, and staff say behaviour has improved significantly over the last two years. This is reflected in the harmonious atmosphere across the school. Pupils are proud of their school, describing it as welcoming and caring.
- Pupils say bullying is rare and, when it does occur, pupils know who to go to for support. They are vehement that there is no racism. Pupils talked positively about the 'Marvellous Me' program. They said it provides rewards, highlights their strengths, and helps their self-confidence.
- Pupils' positive attitudes to learning make a significant contribution to their improving progress. During all lessons observed, pupils were keen to learn, sustained their concentration and were mutually supportive. Pupils said that minor disruptions in lessons are rare.
- Due to improvements to the curriculum, and cohesive and effective management of behaviour, attendance is improving and is now broadly in line with the national average. Persistent absence is declining. Exclusions have decreased over the past two years.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- Pupils' progress slowed over the last two years and levels of attainment dipped. This was due to weaknesses in teaching and the frequent changes of staff. The determined efforts of school leaders to improve pupils' achievement are bearing fruit.
- Pupils' progress is rapidly improving due to consistently effective teaching. This is evident in all year groups and is reflected, not least, in the increasing proportion of pupils in Year 6 who are reaching the expected levels of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics combined. This has risen from just a quarter in 2016, a half in 2017, to around two thirds this year. This is close to the average outcomes in national

assessment tests last year. Between 2016 and 2017, the proportion of pupils attaining above expected outcomes in reading and mathematics rose from 7% and 2% to 13% and 8% respectively. High levels of attainment in writing have also increased, albeit more modestly.

- The improving rate of progress is all the more notable given the high proportion of disadvantaged pupils, many of whom have complex additional needs. The school's meticulous records show that these pupils are typically making similar headway to other pupils. This is because they rise to the school's expectations that all pupils succeed and benefit from the work of teachers and learning mentors in helping this happen.
- Evidence of pupils' accelerating progress is evident at every turn. In Year 1, pupils' confidence in applying their phonics skills when reading and writing generally grows quickly. That said, some pupils lack fluency when reading. They sound out words such as 't-ur-n' accurately but lack the speed necessary to enable their reading to flow.
- Pupils' workbooks show that their skills in English develop well through the year. For example, pupils in Year 2 moved from writing simple sentences to more complex ones, such as 'George couldn't believe his eyes because she had brown spots on her face; she was covered in them.' Pupils in Year 4 showed a good understanding of the characteristics of information texts, creating their own using, for example, sub-headings, rhetorical questions and an authoritative tone.
- Pupils in Year 6 talked about how their improved reading skills help their learning across the curriculum. Many are avid readers. The most able pupils discussed their reading preferences maturely. When reading from 'The Diary of Anne Frank', they drew inferences from the text, showed empathy, and mused on the outcomes of the second book.
- Rapidly improving progress in mathematics is evident from pupils' workbooks. A renewed emphasis on the instant recall of basic number facts, such as multiplication tables, is contributing to pupils' increasing confidence. They are becoming more adept at applying their number skills when tackling mathematical problems. Pupils in Year 1 rose to the challenge of using shapes and grids to describe full- and half-turns. Year 3 pupils drew inferences from graphs of ice-cream sales on different days. By Year 6, the most able pupils gain a growing understanding of the relationship between fractions, ratio, and proportion.
- Improving progress is also evident in science, where pupils' skills in observing, investigating, analysing, and predicting are apparent in their well-presented science work. Pupils also demonstrated secure skills in art, music, and computing.
- Pupils in the inclusion centre make good progress towards their individual targets in their education, health and care plan. Almost all are on-target to reach their goals. These pupils typically spend increasing time in the main school, and are often able to rejoin their classes permanently, reflecting the good progress that they make during their time in the centre.
- Pupils in the main school who have SEN and/or disabilities benefit from skilled support, both for their academic achievement and personal development. The school's records indicate that they typically make good, and often rapid, progress towards their individual targets. Similarly, the progress of low-attaining pupils is accelerating due to effective teaching which takes their starting points into account.
- Pupils in Year 6 were keen to explain to inspectors that they feel well prepared for

secondary school. This was apparent during discussions and lesson observations, where pupils showed resilience, collaborated maturely, and used their key skills effectively across the curriculum.

## Early years provision

## Outstanding

- The highly effective work of the leadership in the early years is evident, not least, in the very stimulating learning environment and curriculum created for all three age groups. Children respond with great enthusiasm to the wealth of stimulating indoor and outdoor activities. They thoroughly enjoy using the extensive resources, such as constructing with planks and blocks, experimenting with jugs, hoses and pipettes in the water trays, planting in the raised flower beds, or snuggling with a book in the reading den.
- As children enter the early years, the social, communication and physical skills of a large proportion are well below those typical of their age group. Most children, including those from vulnerable groups, make rapid progress. Additional funds for disadvantaged children are used effectively. Apart from a dip last year, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development by the end of Reception rose over the previous three years. The proportion of children currently on track to reach a good level of development indicates that the upward trend has continued. Children are well-prepared for learning as they enter Year 1.
- There is a real buzz of purposeful activity across the early years. The two- and three-year-old children in the youngest class were fully absorbed as they played in the 'mud kitchen', used sections of vegetables to paint patterns, and 'cooked' pizzas. The teaching staff supported children's learning very effectively. They promoted children's social development well, encouraging them to share and take turns. Every opportunity was taken to engage children in conversation and to extend their vocabulary.
- Across the early years, staff provide highly effective support without 'spoon-feeding'. This approach successfully encourages children to be curious and find things out for themselves. This was evident, for example, as children in the Nursery planted seeds and used large brushes to paint bold, colourful pictures of plants and flowers.
- In Reception, teachers promote children's language and number skills successfully through a wide range of activities. For example, as children organised a 'car wash' and served in the 'supermarket', adults modelled language and ensured that children were engaged in making lists, sorting small, medium and large vegetables, and counting, adding and subtracting coins. The teacher's question, about the Queen's head being on the coins, illustrated the skilful way that adults take opportunities to extend children's understanding of the world outside their immediate home environment.
- From activities such as listening to the sounds they make in the music/sound bays and listening to stories, children move on to refining their listening skills and identifying the initial sounds of words. By the end of Reception, most children can read and understand simple sentences. They use their phonic knowledge to write their own sentences, spelling most familiar words correctly and making good attempts at new ones.
- Underpinned by their exemplary relationships with adults, children behave very well and develop a good degree of independence. They become confident, creative and persevering learners. The sensitive guidance of adults helps children to understand that



their actions have consequences. Staff are well-trained in how to ensure children's safety. For their own part, children learn to make their own decisions and assess risks for themselves. For example, children are able to decide whether to take an extra step on the climbing apparatus or construct a tower with large blocks of wood.

- Due to the efforts of staff, parents are increasingly involved in their children's learning. Parents value the information they receive about their children's progress. Among parents' comments were: 'Our son has really thrived so far at school. He has come on leaps and bounds'; 'I love how secure the school is and the outside area is fantastic'; 'His key worker is brilliant and has got to know him extremely well.'
- The early years leader provides comprehensive support and guidance for staff, maintains detailed records of children's development, and helps to ensure continuity through the three phases. Staff feel valued and morale is high.

## School details

Unique reference number	116258
Local authority	Portsmouth
Inspection number	10046086

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	455
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Baker
Headteacher	Ash Vaghela
Telephone number	02392 378991
Website	<a href="http://www.portsdown.portsmouth.sch.uk/">www.portsdown.portsmouth.sch.uk/</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:admin@portsdown.portsmouth.sch.uk">admin@portsdown.portsmouth.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	2–3 December 2014

## Information about this school

- The school is larger than average.
- There are Nursery classes for two- to three-year-olds with 58 children on roll, and three- to four-year-olds with 72 children on roll. Children attend these classes on a part-time basis, with a maximum number at each session of 28 and 40 respectively. In addition, there are two Reception classes with 60 children on roll.
- The school has a nine-place inclusion centre for communication and interaction. This is funded by the local authority. All nine pupils are on the school's roll, all of whom have an education, health and care plan. They are mainly from the older classes.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is above average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below the national average, as is the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- Around a half of the pupils are disadvantaged, which is twice the national average.

- There is a breakfast club managed by the governing body and run by school staff.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in all year groups, visiting 26 lessons and a range of small-group activities. Most observations were undertaken with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, the leader of the early years, or leader of the inclusion centre.
- Inspectors met with members of the governing body and had discussions with two representatives of the local authority.
- Meetings were also held with pupils to discuss their views on their learning and well-being, and with parents to gain their views about the school.
- Inspectors met pupils from Years 1, 2 and 6 to discuss their reading. They talked to pupils at break times, in lessons, and as they moved around the school.
- Inspectors examined a range of documents, including information on pupils' performance across the school, improvement plans, school leaders' evaluation of teaching and learning, and curriculum plans.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of books to see what progress had been made across a range of subjects.
- Inspectors took account of the 21 responses to the Ofsted online parent survey, Parent View, and the 38 responses to the staff survey.

## Inspection team

Rob Crompton, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Ross Macdonald	Ofsted Inspector
Krista Dawkins	Ofsted Inspector

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