

Porters Grange Primary School and Nursery

Lancaster Gardens, Southend-on-Sea, Essex SS1 2NS

Inspection dates

21–22 November 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Trust leaders and governors work well together to ensure that the school receives good support. They have a good knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses. This has helped the school to improve quickly.
- Leaders and staff have created a nurturing and inclusive learning environment. This ensures that pupils settle quickly and are confident learners.
- The executive headteacher has developed a strong team ethic. Staff work together well and are committed to making the school as good as it can be. All are proud to work at the school and morale is high.
- Support for pupils' personal development and welfare is excellent. Leaders have an unwavering commitment to the pupils and their families. Through their actions and a strong moral purpose, leaders demonstrate their care and concern for all in the school community.
- Effective use of professional development has resulted in good teaching. Leaders from the trust provide clear feedback and hold teachers to account for the quality of pupils' learning. However, some teaching is variable because good practice is not always shared, and pupils do not make the strongest progress possible.
- Safeguarding is effective. Pupils feel very safe at school.
- Pupils are keen to do well. Positive relationships established across the school ensure that pupils are well cared for and safe.
- Phonics is taught effectively. Pupils receive targeted support that helps them to develop their early reading skills well.
- The curriculum is well planned, ensuring that pupils make good progress across a range of subjects. Opportunities to participate in extra-curricular activities provide further enrichment of their learning.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is a strength of the school. Well-targeted support means that these pupils make good progress from their starting points.
- Children make good progress from their typically low starting points in the early years. Leaders use their assessments effectively to meet the needs of the children.
- Pupils' writing is well supported through the planned sequence of learning. However, their handwriting is weak because teachers do not provide consistent expectations and models of what this should look like in their work.
- Leaders are working hard to improve pupils' attendance. However, there is still more to do to ensure that pupils attend more often.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality of teaching so that a greater proportion of pupils make very strong progress by:
 - ensuring that the good practice is shared more regularly
 - ensuring that the skills of handwriting are taught consistently and applied across all subjects.
- Continuing to work with parents and carers to promote pupils' regular attendance and reduce their persistent absence.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The executive headteacher, ably supported by the heads of school, provides clear direction and vision for the school. There are high expectations for the achievement of pupils regardless of their different starting points or experiences.
- Leaders place a high priority on creating a safe and stable environment. Classrooms are calm yet purposeful, so pupils learn well. Staff share leaders' high expectations. They work effectively as a team, committed to meeting the challenges of a diverse community by providing a good quality of education.
- Trust leaders know the school well. They use their knowledge of strengths within the multi-academy trust to support and improve the school. Leaders and staff welcome the opportunity to see good practice in other schools and work with specialists to become better teachers. This good practice is not always shared, which is why a small amount of teaching remains variable in quality. Opportunities to receive high-quality professional development have resulted in a well-trained and stable staff team.
- Leaders' self-evaluation is accurate. They make appropriate plans to ensure that the school continues to make consistent improvement. They use the plans well to check that progress is made against the targets that are set.
- Leaders use their systems well to check pupils' attainment and progress over their time in school. The information is analysed to identify the impact of the strategies leaders have used to make improvements. For example, taking regular opportunities to improve pupils' mental recall of number facts has improved their skills and fluency in calculation. Leaders carefully check the quality of teaching and quickly provide support when it is needed to ensure that teaching is at least good overall.
- The leadership of pupils with SEND is a strength of the school. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) makes effective use of her knowledge to ensure that pupils receive the appropriate teaching to support their progress. Information is shared between different leaders so that the wider needs of pupils are met, especially for pupils' social and emotional needs.
- The pupil premium funding is used well to address the barriers faced by disadvantaged pupils. Leaders ensure that a wide range of strategies are in place and checked regularly for their impact. They are relentless in identifying pupils' needs and responding quickly where new circumstances present themselves. For example, funding has been used to support pupils who newly arrive at the school without any spoken English. Targeted teaching has successfully raised their language levels. Consequently, disadvantaged pupils make strong progress across the school.
- The sport premium is used effectively to improve pupils' participation in sporting clubs and to improve their health and well-being. For example, additional equipment has been provided outdoors to encourage pupils' sporting and team skills.
- The well-planned curriculum provides pupils with the opportunity to develop skills and knowledge across different subjects. Subjects are linked to provide greater purpose to learning and stimulate pupils' interests. Opportunities for visits and visitors to school enrich pupils' experiences. Subject leaders check that subject-specific skills are

appropriately taught for each age group. Whole-school themes demonstrate the different skills pupils learn. For example, a theme of remembrance showed artistic, creative, historical and English skills.

- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is woven through the school's curriculum. There is a strong emphasis on promoting pupils' understanding of life in modern Britain. Pupils are well informed and reflective about being a successful citizen within their own community.
- Many parents speak positively about the school and many would recommend it to others. Parents are positive about how well their children are taught and supported by teachers and staff. One parent commented on Parent View, Ofsted's online parent questionnaire, 'Porters stands out, because it puts its pupils first.' This was typical of other comments received.

Governance of the school

- The local governing board shares the vision and commitment of trustees and school leaders. Governors have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses through the visits they make to the school. Governors ensure that these visits are purposeful so that they check the information provided by school leaders. In this way, leaders are challenged so that the school continues to be successful.
- Governors have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities. They make use of their different skills to ask probing questions about the performance of the school. They receive good training from the trust to keep their knowledge up to date. They ensure that additional government funding is used well and has a good impact for both disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders ensure that a strong culture of safeguarding permeates across the school. They know their pupils and families extremely well and constantly check on the well-being of the pupils. The family, pupils and well-being staff member keeps regular contact with external agencies so that support is readily provided where it is needed. Leaders are tenacious in pursuing agencies where actions have been promised. Where necessary, leaders take additional steps to secure information to help any vulnerable pupils. This ensures that safeguarding has the highest importance for the welfare of pupils.
- Staff have been well trained and understand about their responsibilities in keeping pupils safe. Governors receive regular updates so that they can check that policies are understood by all the staff. Records are thorough and analysed frequently to check for patterns and trends that may show concern over time. Checks for adults working with children are well organised and meet statutory requirements.
- The school ensures that pupils understand how to keep themselves safe. Pupils told the inspectors that they regularly learn about how to stay safe online and to report any concerns to adults. In their words, 'Block it and report it.'

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching is good because the staff work well with members of the trust to implement strategies for improvement. Staff development and bespoke training identify how teaching can improve through well-thought-out plans. Leaders ensure that teachers are supported so that they are confident in carrying out their roles effectively.
- Relationships between adults and pupils are positive. Pupils respond well to adults' direction so that time for learning is maximised. Pupils make willing contributions to whole-class discussions. Where teaching is stronger, questioning is used effectively to build on pupils' responses. This deepens their understanding because pupils explain and justify their answers. Not all teachers are as skilled with their questioning. This means that pupils do not make the strongest progress they are capable of.
- Classroom learning environments are consistent and follow leaders' expectations. They provide good models to help pupils learn. Pupils use them successfully when checking their own work or when they are stuck. This helps to develop their independent learning skills.
- Teaching assistants are deployed effectively. They are skilled in supporting pupils with SEND. Teaching assistants check pupils' knowledge and make good use of resources to help them gain a better understanding of what they are learning. Pupils with SEND make strong progress from their individual starting points.
- The teaching of mathematics is particularly effective. Teachers provide pupils with the opportunities to develop their fluency through regular practice of number facts. Pupils apply their knowledge to solving number problems, helping to consolidate their understanding. Teachers are using reasoning more effectively to help check pupils' understanding of key concepts. Work in pupils' books and the school's own assessment information shows that current pupils make strong gains in their mathematical skills.
- Teachers use their strong subject knowledge to teach phonics effectively. Assessment is used well to ensure that activities are well-matched to meet pupils' needs. Where pupils struggle, additional support is provided so that they catch up and make good progress.
- Teachers plan clear sequences of learning to support pupils' progress in writing. For example, a pupil was able to discuss his understanding of figurative language because he had been taught how to use metaphors, similes and personification effectively. Teachers ensure that pupils understand and use appropriate vocabulary in their compositions. Words are discussed and displayed around the classrooms, helping pupils to write creatively. For example, to describe a setting one pupil wrote, 'At sunset the waves threw themselves on to the beach.' Pupils write frequently to develop their writing stamina and fluency. However, the teaching of handwriting is inconsistent. Pupils are slow to develop their handwriting skills because they do not receive regular guidance from the teachers. Some teachers' own handwriting does not provide a good model for pupils to follow.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. This is because staff share a strong commitment to supporting pupils' well-being. Leaders have created a safe and welcoming environment where the welfare of pupils and their families is a high priority. Many parents say that the care the staff team shows is a strength of the school. One comment provided on Parent View, typical of others said, 'The support we have received from teachers, assistants and all the staff has been faultless.'
- Pupils are taught about being unique and recognising the qualities in themselves and others. For example, teachers give awards in class that identify when pupils demonstrate their learning powers. Pupils respond thoughtfully in assemblies when asked about different ways they can work together. This builds pupils' self-esteem and confidence. Pupils told inspectors, 'You can only be successful when you are being yourself.'
- Pupils understand about being resilient in their learning. They are not afraid to attempt new things or tackle challenging work. Pupils say that making mistakes is part of helping you to learn and that it will improve your understanding. Pupils understand about British values. The posters they have made give clear examples of how these are reflected through their time at school. For example, they serve as members of the school council or participate in the eco-warriors team. In this way they are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- A well-planned programme of personal, social and health education provides pupils with skills to keep themselves safe in a range of situations. Pupils say that they are safe at school and understand about how to respond to online bullying. They are confident that if they have any concerns then adults will listen and help to resolve their issues.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Teachers set clear expectations for pupils' behaviour. Pupils are attentive and well mannered. They are keen to do well and work hard. However, on a few occasions, some pupils are less focused on their learning where teachers do not engage them with their questioning.
- Pupils play well together at lunchtimes and playtimes. They share their games regardless of their year groups. Play leaders ensure that everyone has the opportunity to join in. This encourages pupils to behave well.
- Pupils take care in setting out their work. They use titles for each piece of work and ensure that these are underlined. However, their handwriting is not consistent because not all teachers make their expectations clear.
- Attendance rates are below national averages. Leaders encourage regular attendance. High attendance is celebrated through class rewards and expectations are shared through termly attendance certificates. Leaders have clear systems for addressing less

frequent attendance and meet with parents where difficulties arise. However, leaders acknowledge more work needs to be done to improve pupils' attendance.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Provisional information in 2018 and the school's own assessment information show that pupils in all year groups are making strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The proportion of pupils achieving the required score in the Year 1 phonics (letters and the sounds they represent) screening check was below national averages in 2018. Inspection evidence shows that pupils are developing their phonics skills well. This is because there is a systematic approach to the teaching of phonics. Assessments are used effectively to identify those pupils who are falling behind to help them catch up.
- In 2018, attainment at the end of key stage 1 was below the national averages at both expected standard and greater depth in writing. Attainment at greater depth standard was the same as the national average for mathematics and above the national average for reading. This is an improvement on results achieved in 2017. From low starting points pupils made good progress. Work seen in pupils' books confirms that current pupils are making better progress over time. This means pupils are well prepared for key stage 2.
- In mathematics, pupils are making strong progress. Pupils' books show that they are working with greater fluency and accuracy in their calculation skills. Pupils use their knowledge well and apply their skills to mathematical problems. Teachers are embedding strategies to support pupils' reasoning so that they gain a stronger grasp of the concepts they are being taught.
- Pupils use their writing skills across the curriculum. They are becoming confident in applying their punctuation and spelling skills in different contexts and writing for a range of purposes. For example, books showed evidence of recording facts about Neil Armstrong or writing diaries from the front during the First World War.
- Pupils read widely and for enjoyment. Effective use is made of a well-stocked and newly refurbished library. Teachers share books through regular reading of stories, helping pupils to develop a love of reading. For example, children from the Reception class were captivated about a story of a wizard while being read to in the library. Older pupils read a range of fiction and non-fiction literature, developing their fluency and stamina.
- Pupils with SEND make strong progress. The support they receive is matched well to their specific needs. Leaders are skilful in identifying interventions that help pupils' progress and support them in their readiness to learn.
- Leaders use the pupil premium funding well to address the barriers to the learning of disadvantaged pupils. There is an emphasis on teachers' understanding of how well these pupils are doing in their class. Leaders regularly check the progress disadvantaged pupils are making. They ensure that additional support is provided to help improve pupils' progress. The difference between disadvantaged pupils' outcomes and other pupils is diminishing.

Early years provision

Good

- Children start the early years provision with development that is well below what is typical for their age. Adults quickly establish warm relationships that make children feel welcome, happy and well cared for. Children settle quickly and rise to the high expectations set by adults. Teachers make accurate assessments of children's needs so that the provision is matched well and they make strong progress.
- The early years leader uses her good understanding of how children learn to make effective use of other adults. The early years pupil premium is used well to provide additional and regular adult support to target the needs of disadvantaged children. Planning systems are based upon finding out what children can do and what they are interested to learn about. The leader ensures that adults know the purpose of each activity and how they can develop children's learning through the questions they ask.
- The Reception indoor and outdoor spaces are well organised. They allow children access to the equipment to support their play. For example, children chose pieces of paper and drawing materials independently to try and form different letter shapes. There is a strong focus for supporting children's communication and language skills. Spaces are provided for children to share books and rehearse their own stories. Adults record their ideas so that children produce their own story books. Children take pride in retelling their stories to other children. This means that children's speaking and listening skills develop well.
- Adults model good behaviour. They sensitively remind children about being kind and considerate about how others may feel. They encourage children to play together and where possible share their ideas. For example, adults encouraged children to share the shapes they made from modelling materials so that they could count the sides and corners of each shape. Children make good progress in the development of their social and emotional skills so that they are well-prepared for their transition into Year 1.
- A high priority is placed on working with parents to support their child's development. Parents are invited to attend weekly sessions that have a focus on children's progress. Children share their learning journeys and adults model different ways of interacting with children. Parents contribute information about their child's development so that there is a good understanding of each child's next steps.
- Safeguarding is effective. Staff have the appropriate qualifications and all statutory requirements for working with children are met.

School details

Unique reference number	142683
Local authority	Southend-on-Sea
Inspection number	10056475

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

Type of school	All-through Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	386
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Graham Lane
Executive Headteacher	Cheryl Woolf
Telephone number	01702 468047
Website	www.portersgrange.co.uk
Email address	office@portersgrange.southend.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Portico Multi-Academy Trust. The school joined as a sponsor-led academy in April 2016.
- The school has a local governing body.
- The school has an executive headteacher and two heads of school.
- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is slightly below the national average. The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is below the national average.
- The majority of pupils are of a White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is higher than the national average.

- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for the additional pupil premium funding is higher than the national average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in every class. Some of the observations were carried out jointly with the heads of school and the director of learning from the Portico Academy Trust.
- During visits to lessons, inspectors spoke with pupils and looked at their work to find out more about how well they are learning.
- A wide range of pupils' books were scrutinised by inspectors throughout the inspection.
- Meetings were held with trustees, the local governing board and senior leaders. Discussions were also held with subject leaders, the SENCo, the leader for the pupil premium, the leader of the sport premium and the curriculum leader.
- Inspectors heard some pupils read. They talked to pupils about their reading and looked at their reading records. Discussions were held with a group of pupils to seek their views about the school and their learning.
- Inspectors examined a range of documents, including school improvement plans, current pupils' progress, governors' minutes of meetings, safeguarding procedures and plans for the use of additional government funding for disadvantaged pupils and the sport premium.
- Inspectors spoke to parents informally as they collected their children at the end of the school day. They considered 81 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as 15 free-text responses. They also took account of 22 responses to the staff survey and the 21 responses to the pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

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