

Portesham Church of England Primary School

Winters Close, Portesham, Weymouth, DT3 4HP

Inspection dates 10–11 October 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- This is a school where every child really matters. Pupils make outstanding progress and achieve very well in both their academic and personal development in all year groups.
- Teaching is outstanding and meets the needs of pupils of all ages and abilities exceptionally well.
- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skill levels appropriate for their age, although their language skills are often less well developed. By Year 6 pupils' attainment is well above average.
- The school's topic-based curriculum provides pupils with a wide range of stimulating activities which captures and maintains their interest very effectively.
- The quality of leadership and management is outstanding at all levels. The headteacher, staff and governors have worked very successfully to ensure the school has improved since the previous inspection.
- Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning and their behaviour is outstanding. They are polite and display a high level of respect for others.
- The overwhelming majority of parents and carers correctly believe that their children are well looked after, happy and very safe in school at all times. All the parents and carers who discussed their views with the inspector are very pleased with the school and believe that their children are making excellent progress.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out with half a day's notice and took place over two days.
- The inspector spent a total of 255 minutes observing nine lessons taught by four teachers. One was a joint observation with the headteacher.
- Discussions were held with members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority, the headteacher, deputy headteacher, staff, parents and carers and pupils.
- The inspector took account of the 36 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning and carrying out the inspection. He also sought the views of 23 parents and carers through individual discussions in the school playground as they waited to collect their children from school.
- The inspector heard pupils from Year 2 and Year 6 read and made short observations of sessions on the teaching of phonics (pupils learning letter patterns and the sounds they represent).
- The inspector observed the work of the school and looked at documentation including the school's self-evaluation, teachers' planning, school development planning, tracking documentation of individual pupils' progress, performance management documentation, local authority reports and school policy documents.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour and scrutinised the school's safeguarding procedures.
- The inspector analysed 13 completed questionnaires from staff regarding their views of the school.

Inspection team

Michael Barron, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a much smaller than average-sized primary school set in a rural village.
- The school is part of the Chesil Education Partnership, a federation of schools in the local area. Each school has its own headteacher and governing body.
- A majority of pupils attending the school do not live in the village.
- Pupils are taught in four mixed-age group classes.
- The school has recently extended provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage to cater for children of nursery age.
- Nearly all pupils attending the school come from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is well below the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported at school action is well below the national average. However, the proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with statements of special educational needs is well above the national average. These needs include communication and learning difficulties.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school has received several recent awards including the Eco School Silver award.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the outdoor environment so that it is of the same high quality as in the rest of the school by:
 - ensuring that, by April 2013, the Early Years Foundation Stage outdoor area provides pupils with a stimulating and suitable environment in which to build up the skills associated with outdoor learning.
- Provide pupils with more frequent opportunities to develop and apply their basic mathematical skills in other subject areas.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Taking into account pupils' different starting points, the proportion of pupils in the school exceeding the expected rate of progress is high compared to national figures.
- Children often enter the school with the skill levels expected for their age although this can vary from year to year because of the relatively small number of children in each year group. They make outstanding progress in both their personal and academic development in the Early Years Foundation Stage because teaching caters exceptionally well for their needs. A strong focus on teaching phonics, coupled with a range of interesting and exciting activities, enables children to make rapid progress building up their early reading skills.
- Outstanding provision in both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 ensures that all pupils, including more-able pupils, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs and also those entitled to the pupil premium, build on this very solid start to their learning exceptionally well and make outstanding progress and achievement in all year groups.
- There is a strong focus throughout the school on the teaching of literacy and mathematics and this is always evident in lessons. Pupils' attainment in the Year 6 national assessments has been well above average in almost every year since the previous inspection. The attainment of pupils presently in Year 6 is also well above average in not only mathematics, reading and writing but also in subjects such as information and communication technology (ICT). This was evident from a scrutiny of pupils' work and from the school's well-developed systems to track the progress of individual pupils in a range of different subjects.
- Opportunities for pupils in all year groups to apply their mathematical skills and knowledge in other subject areas are currently too limited.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- Outstanding teaching over time ensures pupils make excellent progress in all year groups and is reflected in the rise in pupils' progress and achievement since the previous inspection. Much of the teaching observed during the inspection was outstanding and never less than good and this was also reflected in the results of recent internal and external monitoring of the quality of teaching.
- Outstanding teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage ensures that children really enjoy their first experiences of school and this was evident in observed lessons. Activities are very well matched to children's different ages and abilities and there is a strong focus on teaching communication and language skills through exciting activities.
- The Reception Year and Nursery Year children's shared classroom provides a stimulating environment. It is bright, colourful and well resourced and conducive to learning. Adults ensure children have frequent opportunities to develop their curiosity about the world around them. However, the Early Years Foundation Stage outdoor area is very drab in comparison and does not provide children with a suitable environment in which to build up the skills associated with outdoor learning. The adjacent school playground is also dull and uninteresting and pupils agree that it is in need of improvement.
- Teachers display very effective class management skills and have excellent relationships with pupils. The quality of teachers' marking of pupils' work is consistently of a very high standard and teachers' written comments always help pupils understand the next steps in learning.
- Lesson planning in all subjects is very thorough and always takes account of the different experiences and abilities of pupils in the school's mixed-age range classes. Lessons are briskly paced and the work set for pupils usually offers them just the right amount of challenge.
- The school deploys teaching assistants very well in order to ensure that pupils requiring extra help with learning, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, achieve as well as all other pupils.

- The school also ensures that the funding it receives for pupils entitled to the pupil premium is used well to provide extra support for this group of pupils and this helps them to make similar progress to all other pupils.

The behaviour and safety of pupils is outstanding

- The school offers an extremely welcoming and caring environment for pupils and has high expectations of their behaviour, which pupils respond to very well. Incidents of misbehaviour rarely happen. However, older pupils realise that a few of their fellow pupils find behaving well at all times difficult but say that teachers cope very effectively if any minor disruptions occur either in lessons or at break times.
- Pupils say they are always made to feel welcome at school and are confident they will always be very well looked after. They have an outstanding regard for the safety and welfare of others and older pupils say that they really enjoy looking after the youngest children at playtimes.
- Attitudes to learning are exemplary and this is reflected in pupils' consistently above average rates of attendance and their excellent punctuality to school each morning.
- Pupils have a very good understanding of the many different forms of bullying, including physical bullying, cyber bullying and emotional bullying. However, during discussions with the inspector, it quickly became evident that pupils believe that no bullying of any kind occurs in the school. They are also confident that, should bullying of any sort ever occur, adults would deal with it quickly and very effectively.
- The vast majority of parents and carers who completed the online questionnaire or who talked to the inspector correctly believe that their children are very happy and safe in school and are very well looked after. During discussions several parents and carers commented very favourably about how well pupils behave and how well mannered and polite they are.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The quality of leadership and management is outstanding, including the leadership of teaching. This is reflected in the very good quality of the school's regular self-evaluation which consistently scrutinises the school's academic performance rigorously. It provides the headteacher and her dedicated staff with an excellent ongoing breakdown of the school's strengths and aspects in need of improvement and this is a key factor in ensuring that the school continues to provide an outstanding education for pupils.
- Staff share a common purpose of ensuring that the school provides the best education it can for pupils. All teachers have several leadership and management responsibilities and fulfil their roles very effectively.
- A scrutiny of pupils' work confirmed that the school has successfully developed and implemented a topic-based curriculum which integrates different subjects, such as art, history, geography and information and communication technology, in a cross curricular theme-based approach to learning; this meets pupils' needs exceptionally well. It is designed to provide in-depth opportunities for pupils to improve their human, social and environmental understanding and help them to become successful learners, confident individuals and responsible citizens.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is of a very high standard and this is reflected in pupils' excellent behaviour and in their respect for others. Pupils say that they enjoy meeting interesting visitors to the school and taking part in regular visits to places of interest, including big cities such as London, which help to broaden their view of the wider world.
- The school receives light touch support from the local authority. However, it uses its links with the Chesil Education Partnership, a learning community of schools and colleges in the Weymouth and Portland area, very well to enhance the effectiveness of the school, for example, by providing school staff with opportunities to meet teachers from other primary schools in an informal setting to discuss and share ideas about best practice in teaching and learning.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- provides the school with a consistently well-focused level of support and holds the school to account for its actions very effectively when the need arises.
- ensures that pupils of all ages and abilities have equal opportunities to succeed and that any type of discrimination is not tolerated
- contributes very well to the regular monitoring of the school’s performance and progress towards the agreed objectives in the school development plan
- ensures that all the relevant legal requirements are met and that arrangements for the safeguarding of pupils are implemented rigorously
- ensures that the performance management of all staff, including teaching assistants, is linked very effectively to improving the quality of pupils’ learning.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	113833
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	403214

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Susan Blackwell
Headteacher	Vicky Prior
Date of previous school inspection	25 June 2008
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