

# Portchester Community School

White Hart Lane, Portchester, Fareham, Hampshire PO16 9BD

## Inspection dates

3–4 July 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>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The school has a strong, inclusive and community-focused ethos that enriches pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding.
- The headteacher and leaders at all levels are unwavering in their commitment to improve the life chances of all pupils at the school.
- Governors know the school thoroughly. They are ambitious for the school and challenge and support senior leaders well.
- Safeguarding is effective. Pupils feel safe and are happy at school. They are eager to learn and are confident to express their ideas.
- Standards are improving quickly. Current pupils of all abilities are making much better progress than those in the past because teachers' expectations of them are much higher.
- The curriculum is carefully constructed, appropriate to pupils' needs and equips pupils with the skills and knowledge they need for life.
- Careers education and guidance are a major strength. Pupils are increasingly ambitious in their post-16 choices.
- Staff know their pupils very well. Consequently, they are very effective in supporting pupils' personal development and welfare.
- Parents and carers have increasing confidence in the school, and the roll is rising. Leaders work hard to make every parent feel included and involved in their child's education.
- Pupils behave very well around the school and in lessons. In a few cases, where teaching is not consistently strong, such as in some science lessons, pupils lose focus.
- Pupils typically receive useful guidance on how to improve their work. Sometimes the guidance lacks the clarity needed to deepen their knowledge, skills and understanding.
- Teaching is of a good quality because teachers work hard to develop their professional skills. However, some work set needs to make pupils think even harder.
- Disadvantaged pupils are making better progress than in the past. However, some need to make even stronger progress to catch up with their peers.

## **Full report**

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

- Improve teaching and learning and thereby strengthen pupils' rates of progress, especially
  - ensuring that teachers set work that makes all pupils think hard, especially in science
  - making sure that the advice and guidance that teachers provide to pupils consistently deepen their knowledge, skills and understanding.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- Since the previous inspection, the headteacher has worked relentlessly with other members of the leadership team to improve the quality of education. Inspectors saw the effect of this work in many areas, especially in the quality of teaching and learning.
- Senior leaders are passionate about improving the school and work tirelessly to evaluate the impact of their actions. They collaborate fully with middle leaders, who are a strong and cohesive group. Together they are driving forward the school's agenda, and standards are rising as a result.
- Leaders at all levels are ambitious for the school and set increasingly high targets for all pupils' achievement. They are focused on achieving the school's vision for all pupils to be successful, confident and responsible.
- Leaders have worked particularly hard to engage families who may not have the confidence to approach school staff. As a result, the reputation of the school is growing in the local community and the roll is rising significantly. As one parent said: 'We couldn't be happier with our choice of school and would recommend it to any parent due to the school's highly inclusive nature where every child truly matters.'
- Parents are supportive of the school and value the support that teachers provide to their children. Many parents of Year 7 pupils who responded to the questionnaire highlighted the warm welcome and excellent transition arrangements from primary school.
- The school is very inclusive and has developed a strong sense of community, collegiality and moving forward together. Physically disabled pupils integrate totally into mainstream classes. The pre-school and dementia support facilities for elderly local residents, which share the school's site, enable pupils to demonstrate responsibility, care and respect for others.
- Leaders are open and honest about the school's strengths and weaknesses. They know what needs to improve and have detailed and rigorous plans in place to develop the school further. Leaders use research evidence to inform their decisions about which actions to take, and regularly evaluate these actions to make sure that they are working.
- Staff are highly supportive of the school and the headteacher. They enjoy working at the school and appreciate the opportunities they have to contribute to the school's development. One teacher who responded to the survey said, 'The considerations of staff are taken into account and staff are consulted regularly.'
- School leaders have invested heavily in developing teachers' professional skills. For the past year, senior leaders have been coaching all staff on an individual basis, enabling teachers' professional development to be personalised to their needs. As a result, the quality of teaching is constantly improving, which is having a marked impact on the progress pupils make.
- Many school leaders work collaboratively with other school staff in eight local secondary schools, and many lead cross-school groups. Leaders appreciate these opportunities, which allow them to share ideas to raise pupils' achievement further.
- The local authority provides good support at strategic and subject-based level. Officers make regular visits to validate the school's assessment of its performance.

- Teachers fully understand their responsibilities to raise standards. Staff, including newly qualified teachers, reported that they are supported and challenged in equal measure and are held rigorously to account for the progress pupils make.
- Leaders are assiduous in their monitoring of how additional funding supports pupils' performance. As a result, a high proportion of pupils targeted for extra help are making good or better progress from their starting points.
- The curriculum effectively supports the academic and personal development of pupils. For example, the whole-school focus on promoting literacy, particularly through reading, is helping pupils to make better progress.
- Leaders review the curriculum annually to ensure that it is appropriate to the needs and aspirations of each cohort. Pupils have many options to choose from, but staff guide them carefully to ensure that they are aiming high. As a result, increasing numbers of pupils are following the English Baccalaureate route.
- The school's citizenship and religious education curriculum is well thought out and helps pupils to learn about life in modern Britain. The enrichment and assembly programme teaches pupils how to stay safe from threats they may face, such as online gaming, sexting or from radicalisation and extremism. Leaders quickly introduce topics of current relevance to the programme, such as discussions on knife crime, to enable pupils to express their views and concerns.
- The taught curriculum is enhanced by a wide range of extra-curricular activities which support pupils' sporting, artistic, musical, creative and academic development. For example, a group of pupils take part in the Model United Nations summit in America every two years.
- Pupils have many opportunities to take on leadership roles. Year-group councils and 'head students' take on a series of challenges which encourage them to solve problems, work collaboratively and think creatively. As a result, pupils' wider skills are well developed for life beyond school.

## **Governance of the school**

- Governors have a wide range of skills from a variety of backgrounds such as education, business and the military. They know the school well, are ambitious for its future and are clear about its strengths and areas for development. They understand the school and the needs of those who live locally. They are proud of how the school serves its local community.
- Governors challenge and support leaders well and are gaining confidence in how they do this. They monitor pupils' achievement and ask pertinent questions about underperformance. Governors receive detailed information from senior leaders about the use of additional funding and have effective systems in place to monitor how well these funds are spent.
- There is a designated governor who oversees the school's systems and processes for safeguarding pupils. Governors also receive training to fulfil their role, such as 'Prevent' duty and safer recruitment training. All members of the governing body understand their responsibilities for safeguarding pupils.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Safeguarding has a high priority in the school and leaders are extremely knowledgeable and passionate about ensuring that pupils are protected. Training for staff is comprehensive and constantly updated. Record-keeping is thorough and methodical.
- Leaders liaise effectively with outside agencies and are dogged in their pursuit of help for pupils who need it. Pastoral staff and the school counsellor are greatly valued by pupils, who know they will help them if they are in difficulty.
- Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe in school and they understand what to do if they have any concerns. Parent, staff and pupil questionnaires confirm that the school is a safe place.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Good**

- The quality of teaching and learning has improved over time as teachers have developed their skills. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour. Classrooms are calm and orderly and most pupils are keen to learn. Consequently, pupils are making stronger progress in their learning.
- There are very strong relationships between pupils and teachers and among pupils themselves. Pupils are respectful towards staff and each other and are confident in expressing their views and answering questions. Inspectors saw effective examples of teachers using their strong subject knowledge to embed subject-specific terminology and ask probing questions to develop pupils' understanding.
- Teachers plan work carefully to meet pupils' needs. Learning support assistants, many of whom work with pupils with physical disabilities, know their pupils very well and are effective in supporting, encouraging and challenging pupils to do their best. As a result, pupils who receive this additional help are making strong progress from their starting points.
- The school's assessment system, based on age-related expectations, has been carefully constructed and is well understood by staff, pupils and parents. Pupils could confidently tell inspectors if they were meeting the expected standard and what they needed to do to improve their work. As a result, pupils in all year groups are making much more sustained progress than in the past.
- The school's systems for tracking and monitoring pupils' progress are rigorous. Middle leaders review the information regularly with their teams and ensure that where pupils are found to be falling behind, actions are swiftly taken to remedy the situation. Middle leaders meet regularly with senior colleagues to review how pupils are performing and are held to account for the progress that pupils make.
- Pupils' books are extremely well presented and act as a quality resource for later revision. In most cases, the work is pitched well to meet the needs of each pupil. Consequently, pupils of all abilities are making at least good progress over time.
- The school's focus on developing literacy skills is helping pupils to make stronger progress. Pupils are given opportunities in many subjects, such as in English, history,

science and geography, to write in an extended way. Spellings are routinely corrected and pupils are expected to reflect upon their learning and redraft work to make it better. As a result, pupils' confidence and ability to produce high-quality written work are growing.

- Pupils see the value of homework and are expected to complete it. The work they do at home is helping them to develop independence and apply the knowledge they gain in the classroom. In turn, this is helping to promote pupils' better progress.
- All teachers consistently use the school's 'PCS' ('positive comment', 'can do to improve', 'self-review') system to give advice and guidance to pupils on how to improve their work. In most cases, this advice is effective in targeting specific skills that pupils need to develop. However, in some cases, the advice given is not precise enough to deepen pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding.
- While teachers' expectations of what pupils can do and achieve have greatly increased, pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils, are in some cases not being set work which makes them think hard enough. Consequently, their progress is sometimes not as strong as it could be.
- In some subjects, including some science lessons, teaching is not consistently strong and does not engage pupils sufficiently well. Consequently, some pupils lose interest and progress weakens.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils feel safe and well supported. They are friendly, polite and self-confident but also aware of the needs of others, including those who have disabilities. They have high standards of personal presentation and a pride in their school.
- The school has a very welcoming and warm atmosphere. There are a number of colourful, informative displays of pupils' work and motivational statements in corridors. The embracing of diversity and inclusion are key characteristics. Pupils say that bullying is rare and staff deal promptly with any issues that may arise.
- Staff offer very good support for pupils' physical and emotional well-being. Most parents are very positive about the pastoral care their children receive and how, in turn, this helps them to make better progress. As one parent said: 'Any issues raised are dealt with quickly and effectively by staff. A wide range of extra-curricular activities is made available and, in my opinion, this vastly improves my child's enjoyment of school.'
- Opportunities for pupils to develop their wider skills and learn how to stay safe are well developed through the citizenship, religious education and enrichment programmes.
- Careers education and guidance are a strength of the school and are very well led and managed. Leaders have devised a detailed programme to broaden pupils' horizons. For example, pupils visit universities and have talks from outside speakers, often ex-pupils, who share their experiences of life beyond school. Leaders take particular care to

ensure that vulnerable pupils are guided onto the right post-16 courses. As a result, pupils are very well prepared for their future paths.

- Pupils who attend provision off-site are monitored closely to make sure that they are attending, achieving well and are safe. School staff liaise regularly with staff at the alternative provision.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are keen to learn, and conduct themselves well in classrooms and around the building.
- Pupils confirm that behaviour has greatly improved, and the school's records show a sharp reduction in behavioural incidents over time. Consequently, the rate of exclusions is low. Key stage 3 pupils are particularly positive about behaviour, but some Year 10 pupils are a little more negative, highlighting some difficult group dynamics which are making some pupils feel unsettled.
- Pupils are punctual to school and to lessons. They bring the correct equipment for lessons and teachers check on this regularly.
- The school's systems and processes for following up attendance issues are very thorough. School staff liaise closely with parents, taking particular care to engage with vulnerable families. As a result, overall attendance is improving and is approaching the national average. The number of persistent absentees is falling steadily.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- GCSE results for 2017 showed an improvement from 2016 in terms of pupils' attainment, particularly in English and mathematics. Pupils' attainment also improved in nearly two thirds of other subjects compared to the previous year. Disadvantaged pupils achieved better results than the year before.
- Leaders acknowledge that progress measures for 2017 were less strong. Leaders are fully aware of the factors that led to this weaker progress and took decisive action to address those weaknesses quickly.
- Both the school's assessments and work observed in lessons and in books show that current pupils in all year groups are making good or better progress from their starting points across a wide range of subjects, including English and mathematics. This is because teaching is of a higher quality than in the past and teachers have higher expectations of what pupils can do and achieve. The curriculum is also better tailored to meet pupils' needs.
- The school's focused actions to improve the progress that disadvantaged pupils make are bearing fruit. All teachers are linked to three disadvantaged pupils, keep in close contact with their families and meet parents every term. This initiative, coupled with better teaching and other targeted interventions, is ensuring that the majority of disadvantaged pupils are making progress at the same rate as their peers. However, some need to make even stronger progress to catch up with their classmates.

- Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are being well developed. Tutor-time activities regularly give pupils opportunities to read silently or to tackle mathematical calculations. In Years 7 and 8, tutors regularly listen to pupils read. These approaches are helping to develop pupils' confidence and skills.
- Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities make good progress from their starting points because of careful identification of their needs by the coordinator and her team. Specific interventions, such as help with pupils' reading, are effective in embedding pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding.
- Pupils who enter Year 7 with low levels of attainment in English and mathematics are given support to improve through targeted interventions resourced through catch-up funding. These include reading interventions and work to help pupils gain mathematical fluency. As a result of this work, all pupils in 2017 made good or better progress from their starting points.
- Pupils who study at alternative providers are making good progress. They follow a curriculum more suited to their needs.
- The great majority of pupils leave school to continue their education or training. They are increasingly ambitious in the courses they choose because they have been well prepared and have the confidence to aim high.

## School details

Unique reference number	116418
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10046094

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	611
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Denise Fletcher-Lance
Headteacher	Richard Carlyle
Telephone number	02392 364399
Website	<a href="http://www.portchester.hants.sch.uk">www.portchester.hants.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:r.carlyle@portchester.hants.sch.uk">r.carlyle@portchester.hants.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	14–15 January 2015

## Information about this school

- The school is an average-sized secondary school.
- The headteacher also has management responsibilities for Castle Street Day Care Centre for elderly people, Portchester Day Nursery, Little Stars Pre-School and Adult and Community Learning, which use the school site. These establishments were not part of this inspection.
- The proportion of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds is in line with the national average.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage. A very low proportion is in the early stages of learning to speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with SEN is much higher than the national average.
- The school is resourced for up to 16 pupils with special educational needs related to

physical disability, all of whom are integrated into the main school.

- A very small number of pupils attend full-time provision at alternative providers 'The Key' and 'The Space Centre'.
- The school meets the Department for Education's definition of a coasting school based on key stage 4 academic performance results in 2015, 2016 and 2017.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards for attainment and progress.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors met with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders and a range of staff, including those recently qualified. They also met with members of the local governing board and a member of the local authority.
- Inspectors visited lessons in Years 7 to 10 to observe learning in school. Year 10 pupils were, for the most part, sitting formal examinations. In many cases, inspectors were accompanied by the headteacher and senior leaders. An inspector also visited lessons being given to Year 6 pupils during their transition day.
- Inspectors spoke to a range of pupils formally and informally, including those that are vulnerable or disadvantaged. Inspectors also attended assemblies and tutor time.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' work in class and during a formal work scrutiny with leaders. They also discussed pupils' attainment and progress with leaders.
- Parents' views were taken into account through the 33 responses and 32 free-text comments to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View.
- Inspectors also took into account the 66 survey responses submitted by staff and the 18 survey responses submitted by pupils. Inspectors also considered the school's own internal pupil survey responses.
- Inspectors checked various records and documentation, including those related to governance, behaviour, safeguarding, monitoring, self-evaluation and improvement planning.

## Inspection team

Paula Sargent, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Gary Anderson	Ofsted Inspector
Sue Bullen	Ofsted Inspector
Suzanne Richards	Ofsted Inspector

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