

Inspection of Portchester Community School

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

Inspection dates: 30 and 31 January 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a highly inclusive school. The individual needs of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are well known by staff. One parent summed this up by saying, 'The teachers are friendly and approachable with good knowledge of my child and their ability.' Pupils with more complex needs receive expert care and support, feeling fully involved in all aspects of school life. The education of all pupils is deeply enhanced by the rich and varied range of extra-curricular activities, experiences and trips. These form a core part of school life. Pupils value the opportunity to explore their own interests, such as through attending the 'Dance Live' event or the numerous school sports clubs.

Pupils enjoy learning from the school's broad and balanced curriculum. They are grateful for the help of their teachers. In line with the school's values, pupils are supported to become 'successful, confident and responsible' individuals. Within lessons, pupils behave well. Pupils feel happy and safe. They know who to turn to should they have any problems, valuing the pastoral support they receive. Pupils acknowledge that bullying sometimes happens. However, they know that the school works hard to prevent this.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The school has designed an ambitious curriculum. This provides pupils with a wide range of subjects across key stages. The important knowledge that pupils need to learn has been carefully ordered to help pupils build their understanding. Teachers receive detailed information about the support that pupils with SEND need. This allows them to plan for and meet their individual needs.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge. They instil a passion for learning in pupils. In many subjects, teachers introduce new information in manageable steps. They provide frequent opportunities for pupils to practise recalling what they have learned previously. This helps pupils to commit learning to their long-term memories. Teachers regularly check pupils' understanding and address misconceptions swiftly. They give pupils clear guidance on how to improve their work. However, in some subjects, the way new information is introduced, or the activities given, to pupils does not always help them to learn as well as they could. The school is providing further training to ensure that staff are able to use effective teaching strategies across the full curriculum with confidence.

Reading is at the heart of the school's ethos. Pupils are expected to read regularly and are guided towards challenging and interesting books. Across all subjects, teachers competently introduce new vocabulary. Pupils use this confidently in their classroom discussions. Those who need further support to become fluent readers receive the help they need.

The majority of pupils attend school regularly and behave well during lessons. Classrooms are calm and orderly, with pupils engaging positively with their learning.

The school has a clearly defined behaviour policy. The rules are well understood by staff and pupils alike. However, during breaktimes or lesson changeovers, some pupils do not always conduct themselves as well as the school intends. Some are also not always punctual to lessons. Leaders know this and are working with staff to ensure they consistently reinforce expectations for moving about the school site sensibly and quickly.

The provision for pupils' personal development is exceptional. The school's curriculum provides rich opportunities to help prepare pupils for life in modern Britain. Pupils learn about current affairs and debate topical issues. This helps them to build an appreciation for others' perspectives and for different cultures. Through assemblies and tutor time activities, pupils develop the knowledge and skills needed to be active and responsible citizens. The high-quality careers programme helps pupils to make informed decisions for their future. The school endeavours to ensure all pupils go on to secure well-matched places in further education, employment or training.

Staff are highly committed to their roles, and there is a strong team ethos in the school. Many staff devote substantial time to offering pupils a rich set of experiences after school hours. Governors take their responsibilities seriously. They challenge school leaders effectively to address the priorities for further improvements to be made to the education on offer.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, the curriculum is not taught as consistently as leaders intend. This means that some pupils do not always learn as well as they could. Leaders should continue to ensure that staff receive training that will give them the expertise needed to help pupils learn important knowledge and skills over time.
- Some pupils do not always meet the school's high expectations for behaviour outside of structured learning times. This means that, at times of transition, there can be moments of disruption, and pupils are not always ready to learn. The school should continue with plans to ensure that the highest expectations are set for pupils' conduct at all times of the school day.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	116418
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10296237
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	709
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Janet Pearce
Headteacher	Richard Carlyle
Website	www.portchester.hants.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	3 and 4 July, 2018

Information about this school

- The school has a specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND for 15 pupils. All pupils who attend have an education, health and care plan for physical disabilities.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.
- The school currently uses two registered alternative provisions and one unregistered alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The lead inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders, the leader responsible for pupils with SEND, other teachers and support staff.
- The lead inspector met with governors and had a conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, design and technology, physical education and history. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils and staff to hear their views.
- The inspectors considered the responses to the confidential Ofsted surveys for staff and pupils, as well as the responses to Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

Martin Smith, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Harry Kutty	Ofsted Inspector
Jo Petch	His Majesty's Inspector
Alan Johnson	Ofsted Inspector

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