

Porchester Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122529
Local Authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	292425
Inspection dates	24 – 25 April 2007
Reporting inspector	Andy McDowall HMI

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7 - 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	174
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governors	Mrs Andrea West
Headteacher	Mr Keith Harrison
Date of previous school inspection	21 -22 January 2002
School address	Standhill Road Carlton Nottingham NG4 1LF
Telephone number	0115 9520920
Fax number	0115 9520922

Age group	7 - 11
Inspection date(s)	24 -25 April 2007
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Description of the school

Porchester Junior is a smaller than average sized school. It serves an area of private and rented housing and approximately a third of the pupils travel from outside the catchment area to attend the school. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average as is the proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and those with English as an additional language. The number of pupils identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The school has been subject to major building work in recent years.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is an effective school that provides a good standard of education for its pupils and good value for money. Standards are rising and are above average in mathematics and science and broadly average but improving in English. Standards in writing have fluctuated from above average to average in recent years. However, the school is successfully addressing this and progress in writing is now good. Pupils make good overall progress during their time at the school because teaching is good. Boys do particularly well. The teachers plan interesting lessons that the pupils enjoy. Many of these lessons include practical activities and this motivates the pupils well. The school is increasingly making links between subjects. This is helping the pupils to practise their reading, writing and speaking skills through their work in other subjects. The teachers use information and communication technology (ICT) well to support learning in other subjects. The quality of marking varies from class to class. In some classes the pupils are very involved in assessing their own work, but this is not consistent across the school.

Arrangements to ensure the pupils are safe in school are good. Pupils' personal development is effective. They develop positive attitudes to learning and the good progress they make in basic skills and ICT prepares the pupils well for the next stage in their education and later life. The school programme for personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) is good and contributes very well to the way the pupils behave and develop positive attitudes to learning. The pupils have a good understanding of what it means to live a healthy lifestyle. They make sensible choices at lunchtime and are keen to participate in sport and exercise. They make a satisfactory contribution to both the school and the wider community through the sharing of festivals, charity collections and community events. The school council is developing well and class councils ensure that all pupils have a say in school decisions.

Leadership and management are good. The school has been subject to a major building programme in recent years that has disrupted some aspects of its work. It is to the credit of the leadership and management that the school has continued to prosper in these difficult circumstances. The refurbished accommodation now provides a very good working environment for pupils and teachers alike. The school is making good use of the new accommodation to improve the quality of learning. The new provision for ICT is outstanding. The headteacher and senior staff provide clear direction for the school and have a sound understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The systems to check on the progress pupils are making are good, but some of the monitoring of teaching and learning is not sufficiently focused on the current improvements the school is trying to make. Consequently, the school does not always know whether the changes it has agreed are being implemented in all classes. The school is too conservative in some of the targets it sets for pupils. Targets are amended to make them more challenging, but this does not happen as much as it should.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure greater consistency of marking and the way in which pupils are involved in assessing their own work.
- Improve the monitoring and evaluation procedures to ensure they are closely focused on the current school improvement priorities.
- Increase the challenge of the targets the school sets for pupils.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils start the school with standards that are similar to those expected nationally. There has been a steady rise in standards in recent years, and by the time the pupils leave standards are above those reached by pupils nationally. Pupils make good progress throughout the school. A dip in the progress of a small number of high attaining pupils in writing in 2006 has been successfully addressed by the school and currently progress in writing in the upper school is good. Progress is best in science where two thirds of the pupils reached the higher Level 5 in 2006. Boys and pupils entitled to free school meals make particularly good progress in mathematics and science and perform better than similar pupils at other schools. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported well and make good progress. In ICT, standards are above average and progress is good.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well being are good. The school gives a high priority to this aspect of its work and is successful in helping the pupils to develop positive attitudes to their work, their school and each other. Pupils enjoy school and feel they have a say in what happens. The school council is effective and members are keen to spend their budget wisely. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Pupils are actively involved in keeping the school a calm and happy place. The 'SMILE' team takes its responsibilities seriously and helps other pupils to sort out any minor playground disagreements. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is good. The pupils develop a satisfactory understanding of their place in the community through collections for charities and participating in a range of community events. The good progress they make in developing literacy, numeracy and ICT skills prepares them well for the next stage in their education and later life. The pupils have a good understanding of how to live healthy lifestyles. The new menus and fruit bags are very popular, and the high attendance at school clubs provides many pupils with very good opportunities for regular exercise. Attendance is satisfactory and is affected by a number of parents who take their family holidays in term time.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The teachers provide a good range of practical activities that interest the pupils and make learning enjoyable. Because behaviour is managed effectively, classrooms are calm places where pupils can learn. The particular skills of individual teachers are used well to plan lessons for upper and lower school classes. Teaching assistants are an important part of the team and their support ensures pupils with learning difficulties make good progress. The interactive whiteboards and visual imaging equipment are used very well by the staff and this motivates the pupils to learn. The teachers assess the pupils regularly and have a good understanding of where each pupil is and what they need to learn next to make progress. The pupils know their targets and in some classes they are increasingly involved in assessing their own work. Marking is only satisfactory overall because the school policy in this area is not consistently applied. Where the policy is applied well, the pupils receive clear verbal and written feedback on what it is they need to do to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum provided by the school is good. The staff are continually developing the curriculum to make it more interesting for the pupils. Good links are made between subjects that help the pupils to make sense of what they are learning. Opportunities to develop skills in speaking and listening, writing and ICT are clearly identified and this helps the pupils to make good progress. PSHCE is a very strong feature of the work of the school and makes a good contribution to the pupils' personal development. The curriculum is enriched by a good range of visitors such as authors, musicians and theatre companies. The good range of educational and residential visits makes an important contribution to the curriculum. Over the past twelve months, the school has provided opportunities for the pupils to participate in seventeen clubs catering for a wide range of interests, included sporting, musical, scientific and a debating clubs.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. The staff at the school are very diligent in ensuring that pupils are safe and supervised at all times. The school conducts the necessary checks to ensure all staff are suitable to work with children and staff are up to date with their first aid and safeguarding training. The pupils themselves say they feel safe in school and they have a good understanding of how to keep themselves from harm. Good work in PSHCE ensures they are aware of the dangers in society and are supported well to make informed lifestyle choices in the future. Any pupils having personal or social difficulties are supported very well by the school. Key members of staff ensure these pupils have someone to talk to. The pupils receive good guidance on what they need to do to improve their writing because target setting arrangements are good. Pupils who are not making the progress they should are identified and supported well. The school is already working to apply these good systems to reading and mathematics.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has successfully built a team of staff who share a common commitment to do their best for the pupils. He is well supported by the deputy headteacher who provides a good role model to other staff. Responsibilities are appropriately delegated and all staff are involved in reviewing the work of the school. Subject leaders manage their own budgets and consult staff well on developments in their areas of responsibility. Suitable priorities for improvement are set but some of the plans lack detail regarding how the school will measure whether or not it has been successful. The schools systems for self-evaluation are satisfactory and enable the school to have a clear view of its own performance. The ways in which the school monitors teaching and learning are not sufficiently directed at looking for progress in the current areas for improvement in the school. The recent improvements to the accommodation have been managed very well and have resulted in outstanding provision for ICT. The governing body provides good support and challenge to the school. Several governors visit the school regularly and have a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. Financial planning is good. As a result of strong teamwork, the successful management of the refurbishment of the school and the steady rise in standards in recent years, there is good capacity for further improvement.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate.	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	
The effectiveness and efficiency of boarding provision	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B



26 April 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Porchester Junior School. Standhill Road, Carlton, Nottingham, NG4 1LF.

Thank you all very much for making me feel so welcome in your school when I visited recently. I enjoyed talking to you and was impressed by the way you were all very keen to tell me about your school. You told me you think you go to a good school and I agree with you.

Here are some of the good things to report about your school:

- Mr Harrison and the other teachers work hard to keep you all safe and they do the best they can to help you improve your work. Because they do this, you make good progress. You have all been working to improve your writing and I think it is getting better. Keep it up.
- The teachers plan interesting lessons that you all enjoy. They mark your work and set good targets for you to aim for in writing. I think some of you could be given more opportunities to mark your own work and this is one of the things I have asked the school to do.
- There are lots of out-of-school activities for you to get involved with and several of you told me how much you enjoy the debating club and how you enjoyed the recent residential visit. You know about how to stay healthy and are enjoying the new menus and fruit bags.
- Your school helps you to learn about how to get along with each other. You behave well in and around school and the 'SMILE' team does a really good job in sorting out any problems you might be having.

I have asked the school to do two more things to help it to get even better. The first is to set higher targets particularly in reading and mathematics for some of you so that everyone does all they can to help you to reach them. The second thing is to improve the way checks are made on how well you are all doing, so that the school can say whether the changes it is trying to achieve are helping you to improve.

Thank you all again for being so helpful to me.

Yours sincerely

Andy McDowall
Her Majesty's Inspector