

Inspection of Portesham Church of England Primary School

Winters Close, Portesham, Weymouth, Dorset, DT3 4HP

Inspection dates: 19–20 May 2021

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Inadequate

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Early years provision

Inadequate

Previous inspection grade

Outstanding

What is it like to attend this school?

The quality of education received by pupils has declined significantly since the previous inspection. There has also been substantial turbulence in staffing and governance since that time.

Many teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can do and achieve. The curriculum is underdeveloped and pupils do not learn enough in many subjects. However, in art and design pupils achieve well. Pupils' enjoyment and success in this subject are evident in their work around the school.

Most pupils enjoy coming to Portesham School and this is reflected in their regular attendance. They told inspectors they feel safe and well looked after and like playing with their friends. They say bullying is rare and know that an adult in school will sort out any squabbles. Parents spoken to by inspectors support this view.

Pupils' attitudes to learning fluctuate. When work inspires and excites them, pupils behave well and work hard. However, when learning does not match their needs, pupils lose concentration and learning stalls.

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

Leaders, including governors, demonstrate limited capacity to improve the school. They do not recognise the extent of the school's weaknesses. Their view of the school is too positive. The school's improvement plan is not well thought through. Leaders, including governors, have not focused on the right priorities to improve the school.

The quality of education has significant weaknesses. The curriculum is not ambitious enough and not well planned. Limited consideration is given to planning content choice and the order in which new learning is taught. Pupils are not sure why they are carrying out the work they are doing in lessons or how it links with what they have done in the past. For example, in mathematics learning is disorganised, so pupils are unable to remember what they have learned. Leaders and staff place too much emphasis on activities and not on what pupils need to learn. Inspectors noted that during a 'maths day' pupils could talk about the games they were making but not the aspect of mathematics this was based on. As a result, pupils are not well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Reading across the school is not a priority. Pupils, including those in the early years, do not get enough opportunities to read. Pupils who have fallen behind do not receive the additional support they need to catch up quickly. Staff do not receive the training they need to support pupils' early reading. Books do not match the phonic knowledge of pupils well enough. Consequently, this hampers pupils' reading development.

Leaders, including governors, do not ensure that teachers provide effective support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff have not received sufficient training to enable them to meet these pupils' needs. Additional support is not well planned or effectively delivered. Consequently, provision for pupils with SEND is weak.

Teachers' expectations of children in the early years foundation stage are too low. Staff do not receive the training they need to develop their own knowledge and understanding of the early years. The quality of education provided is weak and children do not achieve as well as they should. They are not well prepared for Year 1.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is weak. Pupils are not able to talk about British values such as democracy, liberty and law. They have limited understanding and knowledge about other cultures.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders have completed training in safer recruitment and know the importance of carrying out and completing all the required checks. Safeguarding records are in place but are not well organised.

Staff receive safeguarding training and understand what they need to do should they have any concerns. However, leaders are not rigorous in checking that all staff are confident in safeguarding policies and procedures.

Most pupils feel safe in school and understand the need to keep themselves safe. For example, older pupils can explain the importance of internet safety.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders' improvement planning does not clarify precisely the actions that need to be taken to improve the school rapidly. Leaders have not established how, and by whom, these actions will be monitored and evaluated. As a result, improvement work is not targeted precisely enough to tackle key weaknesses effectively. Leaders need to identify important next steps and outline these clearly in improvement plans, detailing who will check these.
- Leaders, including governors, do not have clear and reliable monitoring systems in place. This means that they are not able to hold staff to account for the quality of education that pupils receive. Leaders, including governors, need to be meticulous in their checking of the impact of their work on the quality of education for all pupils and hold staff to account for this.
- Provision for pupils with SEND is weak. Leaders, including governors, have not given attention to the quality of education these pupils receive. Teachers do not ensure that learning activities meet the needs of pupils precisely. As a result,

pupils cannot access their learning and do not make sufficient gains across the curriculum. Leaders must, as a matter of urgency, put in place an appropriate curriculum which meets pupils' needs and enables them to secure the knowledge and skills they need.

- The early reading curriculum is disorganised. Leaders do not ensure that reading is prioritised. Books do not match the phonic knowledge of the pupils, and staff have not received suitable training. Consequently, pupils do not read as well as they should. Leaders need to make sure that reading is prioritised swiftly. They need to ensure that pupils who have fallen behind receive appropriate support to help them make rapid progress.
- Leaders are aware that the curriculum is not planned well. There is inconsistency between subjects in the knowledge and skills which pupils are expected to learn. Leaders need to identify, sequence, and be more precise about the key knowledge that they expect pupils to remember across the whole curriculum.
- There is limited capacity to improve the school. The quality of education has declined since the previous inspection. Governors should fulfil their responsibilities and hold leaders to account effectively. Leaders must evaluate the school's weaknesses accurately and plan strategically to improve the school.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

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

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	113833
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	10188185
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	74
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Clive Burgess, MBE
Headteacher	Vicky Prior
Website	www.portesham.dorset.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	10 October 2012

Information about this school

- There has been significant turbulence in staffing and governance since the previous inspection.
- The number of pupils on roll has decreased.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. Inspectors deemed the inspection a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school, and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons

responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the acting deputy headteacher, subject leaders and the chair of governors.
- Inspectors focused in depth on reading, mathematics, art, and design. Work in other subjects was also considered.
- Inspectors visited lessons, often with a senior leader, and looked at pupils' work as well as speaking with pupils. Discussions were held with subject leaders and class teachers.
- Inspectors met with the designated lead for safeguarding and viewed safeguarding records. The lead inspector met the special educational needs coordinator.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils to talk about the quality of education and other aspects of school life. A group of teaching and support staff also met inspectors.
- Inspectors examined a range of documentation provided by the school, including the school's website, the school's self-evaluation document, the school's improvement plan, and documentation relating to safeguarding.
- Inspectors spoke to parents at the end of the first day of the inspection.
- Inspectors held telephone conversations with the school's independent external adviser, the education challenge lead for the school and two advisers from the diocese.

Inspection team

Jen Southall, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Sue Costello

Her Majesty's Inspector

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