

Portway Primary School

Stratford Road, Plaistow, London, E13 0JW

Inspection dates 25–26 March 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Leadership and management		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Early years provision		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires special measures.

- Pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics is inadequate across the school. Standards have declined steadily and are below average by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils make inadequate progress from their starting points in reading, writing and mathematics. They are not taught basic skills well enough.
- The gap between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils fluctuates and is not closing rapidly enough in all year groups.
- Subject and other leaders do not have a secure grasp of how well pupils are achieving. Consequently, they do not know what needs to be improved most.
- Pupils are often set work that is too easy for them. They are not expected to work hard and are not given enough time to complete their work.
- Teaching is inadequate because teachers' expectations of what pupils can do are too low. Teachers do not use their knowledge of what pupils already know and can do. They do not set tasks that help pupils build up their skills quickly.
- Safety requires improvement because until recently, systems to prevent incidents of bullying were not implemented consistently by all staff. In addition, safeguarding policies had not been kept up to date.
- In the past, school leaders have been too slow to tackle weak teaching. There have been few systematic checks on teaching. Teachers have had little support and guidance to help them to improve their work.
- Some leaders have worked in isolation and important information is not always widely shared. Consequently, not all staff have implemented whole-school systems for improvement consistently.

The school has the following strengths

- The acting headteacher and governors are working in close cooperation with the consultant headteacher and local authority to improve teaching. However, their actions have not yet brought about the required improvement.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They like school and this is reflected in their positive attitudes and good attendance.
- The governing body, under new leadership, has taken decisive action by challenging school leaders to secure rapid improvements to the quality of education provided by the school.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school. They are aware of how to keep themselves safe outside school.
- Children get off to a good start in the Nursery.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils’ learning in 26 lessons or parts of lessons, 10 of which were seen jointly with senior leaders. They looked at work in pupils’ books and they listened to pupils reading in Years 2 and 6. They observed pupils’ behaviour in class and as they moved around the school. Inspectors visited two assemblies.
- Meetings were held with school leaders, groups of pupils and four governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body. The inspectors met with a representative from the local authority.
- Among the documents scrutinised were the school’s own view of its performance, plans showing how it is going to improve and minutes from governing body meetings. Inspectors also looked at how the school records and tracks pupils’ progress and documentation showing how the school keeps pupils safe.
- The views of parents were taken into account by analysing the 43 responses to the online survey Parent View. Inspectors also met with parents informally during the inspection and they received one email from a parent. Staff views were considered by analysing the 18 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Joy Considine, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Lynn Lowery	Additional inspector
Ann Short	Additional inspector
Meena Walia	Additional inspector

Full report

In accordance with 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.

Information about this school

- The school is much larger than the average-sized primary school and is expanding in size to take four forms of entry into each year group. Currently there are four classes in each year group from Reception to Year 3. There are three classes in each year group in Years 4 to 6.
- There is provision for children in the early years in the Nursery and Reception classes. Children attend the Nursery on a part-time basis while, in Reception, they attend full-time.
- Most pupils are from minority ethnic groups and a higher than average proportion speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for additional funding, known as the pupil premium, is above average. This is additional funding provided by the government to support those pupils who are eligible for free school meals or who are in the care of the local authority.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards. These are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6.
- There has been a substantial building and refurbishment project to increase accommodation and to improve the fabric of the existing building.
- There have been considerable staff changes since the previous inspection, including at senior leadership level. The school is currently led by the deputy headteacher in an acting capacity.
- The school is receiving additional support from a local leader of education, the headteacher from Selwyn Primary School.
- The school provides a breakfast club and an after school club for pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leaders and managers at all levels by ensuring that:
 - performance information is understood and used to identify the actions that are needed to secure swift improvements
 - the quality of teaching is checked systematically, and teachers receive advice and guidance to help them improve their skills
 - all staff are involved in setting priorities for improvement and understand their role in implementing agreed policies consistently
 - there is consistency in leadership across year groups
 - safeguarding procedures and documentation are kept fully up to date
 - governors continue to be active in monitoring the school and checking that agreed actions are effective in improving the quality of teaching and the achievement of pupils.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is at least good by:
 - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve by setting ambitious targets for pupils' learning and progress
 - ensuring that teachers use assessment information accurately to set tasks that build on pupils' skills and are demanding enough for the most able and not too difficult for others

- making better use of time in lessons so pupils have enough time to complete their work
 - developing teachers' questioning skills so they probe pupils' understanding deeply and so enable them to learn well.
- Improve pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics throughout the school by:
- making sure that pupils develop basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics securely by the end of Year 2
 - ensuring that teachers' assessments of pupils' understanding are accurate
 - closing the gaps between pupils supported by the pupil premium and other pupils in school
 - ensuring that pupils correct and improve their work when it has been marked
 - closely checking pupils' progress during lessons and move them on quickly to more demanding work as soon as they are ready.

An external review of the use of pupil premium funding should be undertaken to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are inadequate

- The leadership and management have not ensured that the school is providing an acceptable quality of education for its pupils. Since the previous inspection, standards and the quality of teaching have declined. The school is currently without a substantive headteacher and is reliant on external support provided by a consultant headteacher from another local school.
- Teaching is inadequate and standards in reading, writing and mathematics have declined since the previous inspection. At the end of Year 2, they have been significantly below average for several years with little sign of improvement. There is a legacy of underachievement and so pupils across the school have significant gaps in their learning.
- Despite the legacy of weak achievement, there is a positive atmosphere in school because leaders have successfully created an ethos in which pupils enjoy school and behave well.
- Some senior and middle leaders have not shared important messages with their colleagues. Consequently, teamwork is weak and there is little accountability for whole-school developments. Communication between staff is poor. As a result, information is not shared widely and staff do not apply policies consistently.
- The leadership of teaching is ineffective. Until recently, there were no checks on teachers' performance and so inadequate teaching was not tackled. Teachers had little guidance on how they could improve their skills. Although current leaders are addressing this, too much inadequate teaching remains. It is only recently that teachers' training needs have been identified and a training programme put into place.
- Subject leaders do not have a secure enough grasp of information about pupils' achievements and so they do not have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weakness of their subjects. They do not all have the skills to check and improve the teaching of their subjects.
- The acting headteacher and governors have improved systems for recording and tracking the progress of different groups of pupils. This shows that pupils eligible for the additional government funding do not progress as well as they should. The school receives a large sum of money that has been used to employ additional teachers but, as yet, it has not helped them to achieve as well as their classmates. This is why not all pupils have equal opportunities to succeed.
- The sports funding has been used effectively. The school employs sports coaches who help pupils to improve their skills in activities such as dance, judo and football, as well as to train staff. Consequently, pupils enjoy a wide range of activities that keep them fit and healthy.
- The new primary curriculum has not yet been fully implemented owing to changes in teachers' roles and responsibilities. The school has introduced the new programmes for teaching mathematics, reading and writing, and leaders are considering how best to introduce the other subjects across the school. However, in some subjects, including writing, leaders do not ensure that pupils develop their skills step by step and this slows their progress.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively and ensures that pupils do not suffer discrimination. Pupils are encouraged to consider the needs of others and to value the thoughts and beliefs of their classmates. This helps to foster good relationships. Elections to the school council provide pupils with opportunities to understand democratic processes.
- The recent 'Arts Week' provided pupils with opportunities to learn about famous British leaders and historical figures and the impact they made on the way we live today. This helps to promote British values and so adequately prepare pupils for life in modern Britain. However, there were missed opportunities for pupils to deepen their understanding by carrying out further studies to extend their historical and geographical knowledge and understanding.
- The school's arrangements for protecting and safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements. Following governors' request for a safeguarding audit in the autumn term, action was taken to address the issues raised to make sure that all required documentation is up to date. Staff are provided with regular training that helps them to keep pupils safe in school.
- In the past, the local authority has not been effective in making sure the school maintains its good overall effectiveness. This year, the local authority has increased the level of support provided to the school. Advisers work in close cooperation with current leaders and governors to support the school in bringing about the necessary improvements.
- Most parents who responded to the Parent View survey or spoke to inspectors are confident that the school responds to their concerns.
- The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers.
- **The governance of the school:**

- As a result of their concerns about pupils' achievement in 2014, governors challenged school leaders over the decline in the school's performance. They obtained support from the local authority to strengthen leadership. Under the direction of the new Chair, governors are working in close cooperation with the consultant headteacher to drive forward the required improvements.
- Governors know that pupils are not doing as well as they should be because they now have a much better understanding of performance information. They know that teaching is inadequate because they receive accurate information from current leadership. They have introduced systems to ensure that all teachers are accountable for pupils' progress and have made it clear that only the best teaching will be rewarded. They ask pertinent questions of leaders to ensure that the right actions are taken. However, it is still too early to assess the impact of these actions.
- Governors understand how pupil premium funding is spent but, until September 2014, they had had insufficient information to be able to check on its impact on raising the achievement of disadvantaged pupils.
- Governors commissioned a safeguarding audit and acted on recommendations. Consequently, they ensure that the school now meets all statutory responsibilities, including those for safeguarding children.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

Require improvement

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. There is very little low-level disruption, even in those lessons where the work provided is too easy. Pupils want to learn and they have very positive attitudes towards their teachers and to each other. They listen attentively because they do not want to miss anything.
- Break times are safe and happy occasions. Pupils get on very well together regardless of background. Those who spoke to inspectors said that there was very little poor behaviour and most pupils were kind and helpful.
- Pupils are polite and well mannered. They respect each other and adults and spoke fondly of their school to inspectors. Pupils in Year 6 are very aware that they are role models for younger pupils and they take this responsibility seriously.
- School records show very few reported incidents of poor behaviour and the number of exclusions has reduced. Pupils' attendance has improved and is above average.
- The breakfast club provides pupils with a nutritious and healthy start to the school day. There is a wide range of additional activities available in the after-school care that adds to pupils' enjoyment of school.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure requires improvement. Although pupils feel safe in school, some lapses in statutory documentation have only recently been rectified. Governors requested a safeguarding audit which identified some gaps and these have now been addressed. The school now meets all the statutory requirements for keeping pupils safe.
- In the past, not all staff fully implemented the schools systems to tackle and eliminate bullying. New procedures have been agreed with staff so that they understand their role in tackling this type of behaviour. There have been no recent incidents and pupils are confident that current leaders will take immediate action should they raise a concern. Pupils say bullying is rare and that there are very few incidents of unkindness.
- Pupils have a well-developed awareness of different forms of bullying, including that relating to technology. They know it is unwise to provide personal information to strangers on the internet.
- Pupils have a clear awareness of how to stay safe outside school. They know about dangers associated with roads and railways and understand what to do if approached by strangers.
- The vast majority of parents who responded to the survey and who spoke to inspectors agreed that their children behave well and are safe and happy at school.

The quality of teaching is inadequate

- There is too much inadequate teaching to secure good progress across the school. Although teaching is stronger in Years 4 to 6, pupils have too much ground to make up. Teaching overall is not strong enough to help pupils to make the progress of which they are capable.
- In many lessons, teachers' expectations for pupils, including those from minority ethnic groups, are too low. The targets set for each year group lack ambition and are not demanding enough to address previous underachievement. Work in pupils' books shows little challenge and work is frequently unfinished. This is because teachers do not always give pupils enough time to complete their work.
- Teachers do not use assessment information to plan tasks. They are not always clear about what pupils can do and the work provided does not help pupils to make progress. Some disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs have work that is too hard for them while the most able pupils have work that is too easy. There are times when work does not build on what pupils have previously learned and so they do not develop their skills and understanding systematically.
- The teaching of writing is inadequate. This is because teachers do not have secure enough subject knowledge to explain and demonstrate how pupils' work can be improved. Pupils do not have a secure enough grasp of basic skills, including spelling, punctuation and grammar to write fluently and confidently. Some teachers' assessments of pupils' levels of understanding are too generous and so they do not provide work that tackles particular weaknesses.
- In mathematics, pupils are often expected to use skills that they have not yet fully mastered. For example, pupils have opportunities to solve problems in mathematics but, because they do not have a quick recall of number facts, they are unable to complete the tasks quickly enough. This slows their progress.
- Most teachers provide pupils with plenty of opportunities to share their ideas and discuss their learning. Although teachers ask pupils questions, they do not all probe pupils to deepen their thinking and extend their understanding.
- Staff have introduced a new scheme to teach reading and this is beginning to raise standards. However, some teachers do not move pupils on fast enough. Some pupils in Year 2 have reading books that are too easy for them and this prevents them from making more rapid progress.
- By Year 6, pupils say they enjoy reading and that they read frequently in school. However, a legacy of underachievement means that they do not have sufficient basic skills to read fluently, confidently and with good understanding.
- Teachers mark pupils' work by providing comments about what they have done well and what they need to do to improve their work. However, there are very few occasions when pupils respond to these comments and so they continue to make the same errors.

The achievement of pupils is inadequate

- Pupils, including those from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language, do not achieve as well as they should. Their progress is inconsistent and so, by the end of Year 6 in the national tests in 2014, their attainment in reading, writing and mathematics declined and is now significantly below average.
- At the end of Year 2, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics has been significantly below average for several years with little sign of improvement. Work in pupils' current books shows that they make little progress and standards are still well below average.
- Although published data for pupils at the end of Year 6 in 2014 indicates that pupils made adequate progress, this is declining year on year. Current assessment information held by the school shows that pupils' rates of progress have declined further and are now inadequate. Work in pupils' books shows that they do not make enough progress because they do not have a secure enough grasp of basic skills.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs progress at rates similar to their classmates. Because their progress is not always recorded accurately enough, they do not always receive the level of support they need. There are times in class when the level of work is too hard for them.
- Disadvantaged pupils do not achieve as well as others. In the 2014 national assessments, they were about a term and a half behind other pupils in school in reading, writing and mathematics. In comparison with other pupils nationally, they were about two terms behind. Disadvantaged pupils make similar progress to other pupils in reading but they do not make as much progress as other pupils nationally in writing or in mathematics. Assessment information held by the school shows wide variations in the attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils currently in school, and that the gap is not closing rapidly enough.

- There is too little challenge for the most able pupils. Work in class is often too easy and pupils are not moved on quickly enough to suitably demanding work. According to the national assessments in 2014 very few pupils attained the higher Level 3 at the end of Year 2. At the end of Year 6, the proportion of pupils attaining the higher level 5 in national tests was significantly below average.

The early years provision

requires improvement

- The early years requires improvement because teaching is variable and so children do not make consistently good progress. It is better in the Nursery than in the Reception classes. In the Nursery, children make swift progress in learning letters and sounds (phonics). They develop their early reading and writing skills quickly and make good attempts to write simple words and phrases.
- Although the early years leader understands the strengths and weaknesses of the provision, the children's assessment information is not secure. Leaders have not secured consistency across the early years and so leadership and management of this part of the school requires improvement.
- Children are warmly welcomed into a safe and stimulating environment that is very well resourced, both indoors and outside. They make the progress expected in the early years overall and so are prepared adequately for the start of Year 1.
- In the Reception classes, the most able children write confidently and progress well. However, the activities provided for less able children are sometimes too hard and they do not make enough progress. This is because teachers in the Reception year do not all have a secure enough grasp of what the children can do and so the activities they provide do not always build up their skills.
- Children have good social skills. They develop confidence through choosing activities for themselves that capture their interest. They share and take turns and show curiosity about the world around them. For example, children in Nursery used microscopes to examine the cress they grew from seeds.
- Children get on well together and they behave well. They feel safe in the early years because staff are very caring and make sure they are on hand to respond to the needs of the children.

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	131846
Local authority	Newham
Inspection number	448859

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	717
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dasha French
Headteacher	Michael Doughty
Date of previous school inspection	13 July 2010
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