

Inspection of Porter Croft Church of England Primary Academy

Pomona Street, Sheffield, South Yorkshire S11 8JN

Inspection dates:	10 and 11 June 2025
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

The headteacher of this school is Cath Thomas. The school is part of Koinonia Academies Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Cath Thomas, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Reverend Karen Cribb.

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding for overall effectiveness at its previous inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The school has not been inspected under section 5 of the Act since March 2015. Since September 2024, schools have not been awarded an overall effectiveness grade.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils love attending this warm and welcoming school. Many pupils say that school is like a 'second family'. Pupils enjoy learning and behave exceptionally well, upholding the school's values of 'respect, acceptance and fellowship'.

When pupils join the school, they quickly build strong relationships with each other and staff who nurture a caring and inclusive culture. Pupils are confident that staff will listen to any worries that they may have.

From the Reception Year, children receive an excellent start to their education. They are supported extremely well to gain the language and communication skills to build strong foundations for future learning. As pupils progress through the school, they continue to develop positive attitudes to learning.

Expectations for pupils' achievement are high. Many pupils join the school from overseas unable to speak English. The school welcomes these pupils, celebrating cultural differences through activities such as the 'cultural fayre'. Highly skilled staff support pupils to overcome any language barriers. Consequently, pupils thrive and achieve well overall, particularly in reading.

Pupils benefit immensely from the school's exceptional range of experiences, which cater for a range of interests. Activities include participating in inter-school sports and performing in the choir in Sheffield Cathedral.

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

Reading is at the heart of the school's curriculum. The school ensures that pupils learn to read across the curriculum. Consequently, pupils develop an understanding of important vocabulary. This helps pupils to explain their learning well. In the Reception Year, children get off to a strong start when learning from the school's phonics programme. Many children start school with gaps in their language knowledge and skills. Teachers quickly check and address these gaps. The knowledge and skills that pupils gain in reading are exceptional. Pupils enjoy reading a wide range of high-quality texts.

The school has reflected on the low 2024 published outcomes in writing. Leaders have developed a clear plan to address these. The impact of leaders' work can be seen in pupils' work in English, which is now of a higher standard. Pupils structure their writing more effectively. However, the quality of some pupils' writing is hampered by weak grammar, punctuation and spelling. The new writing strategy is not fully embedded and variability remains in how well it is taught and checked. It is too soon to see the impact of this work across all subjects where pupils write.

The school has restructured the curriculum to ensure that it is ambitious for all pupils. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported effectively. The school carefully identifies pupils' individual needs. Learning is adapted to enable pupils with SEND to achieve success alongside their peers.

In the Reception Year, staff help children to learn a wide vocabulary. If children have limited language skills, or are new to English, the school makes sure that children quickly learn language skills. Children achieve exceptionally well as they progress through Reception Year.

Teaching approaches enable pupils to remember important knowledge. For example, in mathematics, teachers check that pupils understand important curriculum content. They address misconceptions and gaps in pupils' understanding effectively. Teachers adapt activities to support pupils to learn successfully. At times, in some foundation subjects, the tasks that pupils are set do not help them to build on their prior learning as well as they could. This happens when teachers do not use the information they have on what pupils already know to design activities. Overall, pupils achieve well but sometimes pupils' learning does not build as well as it could.

Children settle quickly in the Reception Year because of the high levels of care and consistent expectations for behaviour and routines. As pupils progress through the school, reflective conversations support pupils when behaviour does not meet the school's high expectations. This helps pupils learn to make better choices and become exceptional role models.

The school's work to develop pupils' character traits and talents is impressive. The school's extensive effort to support the local and global community means that pupils actively improve the lives of others. For example, pupils held a cake sale to raise money to improve sanitation in a village in Africa. Pupils' leadership roles are purposeful. They have a direct impact on the school. For example, 'collective worship leaders' plan and lead school assemblies. The school council recently raised money to support Sheffield Children's Hospital and helped to celebrate a religious holy month. Pupils learn their place in the school and wider world.

The school and the trust share the same vision to provide the best for every pupil. The trust and local governors understand their roles well. They check that the school's actions benefit all pupils. Staff value the steps that the school takes to support their well-being and manage their workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's approach to teaching and checking pupils' writing is variable. There are inconsistencies in the quality of pupils' writing. In some subjects, pupils' writing is hampered by weak sentence construction, punctuation and spelling. The school should

ensure that all staff are trained to implement the new writing strategy so that they support pupils to improve their writing to a high standard.

- On occasions, information on what pupils know and can do is not used well enough to inform the learning activities that pupils are set in some foundation subjects. Consequently, pupils' learning does not build as securely as it could. The school should ensure that staff are helped to use assessment information to design activities that enable pupils to build knowledge and deepen their understanding, so that pupils achieve highly across all subjects.

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	139986
Local authority	Sheffield
Inspection number	10346510
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	214
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Rev Karen Cribb
CEO of the trust	Cath Thomas
Headteacher	Cath Thomas
Website	www.portercroft.org
Dates of previous inspection	4 and 5 March 2015, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is the only school in Koinonia Academies Trust.
- The school is part of the Diocese of Sheffield. The last section 48 inspection, for schools of a religious character, took place in March 2020. Section 48 inspections were suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic. They restarted in September 2021. The next inspection will be within eight years of the last section 48 inspection.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation 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 inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with a range of leaders, including the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator and those responsible for the curriculum.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of governors who is also the chair of directors of the trust and the vice-chair of governors.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. 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. The lead inspector observed some pupils read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site.
- Inspectors gathered the views of parents and carers by considering the responses to Ofsted Parent View and by talking to some parents before school. Inspectors also evaluated responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Kathryn McDonald, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Adrian Fearn

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2025