

THE PORTFIELDS COMBINED SCHOOL

Westbury Lane

Newport Pagnell

Bucks. MK16 8PS

Tel: 01908-616060 Fax: 610793

HEADTEACHER: Mrs Mary St-Amour, M.A.

CHAIR OF GOVERNORS: Mr Matthew Carter

Beacon School

School Achievement Award

TTA Partnership Promotion School

Primary Schools Learning Network

DfES Open Schools Programme

Healthy Schools National Award 2006

Sports Activemark 2006

Foundation School

OfSTED – Outstanding School 1997

OfSTED – Outstanding School 2002

OfSTED – Outstanding School 2007

OfSTED – Outstanding School 2010

We welcome your child to Portfields Combined School. This information pack gives details about our School. Please keep it for reference, and contact us for any clarification or further information you require.

Foreword by the Chair of Governors of the Portfields Combined School:

Welcome to Portfields School! We are very proud of our school and we hope you will be impressed. This pack will provide you with some useful information about our school and give you an understanding of what we are about.

We sincerely hope your child will get the opportunity of experiencing life here at Portfields. As parents you will reap the benefits of knowing they are entering an environment that will be stimulating, rewarding and secure. Your child will benefit from a first class education in a very caring and happy environment.

We have been judged to be an “Outstanding” school for the last 13 years by OFSTED. Our educational standards are amongst some the best in the country and we continue to exceed government targets and national averages. We are proud to be a Beacon School, and as such are recognised as a centre of excellence and a setter of standards by which others are measured. A Healthy Schools National Award and a Sports Activemark are among our other achievements.

We have a vision statement “To give each child the best preparation for life in a changing environment, instilling in them the values for continual learning, tolerance and respect for self and others.” Everyone here at Portfields constantly works to fulfill this vision.

The children’s social welfare and cultural development are also a fundamental part of their education too. The children are extremely well cared for in a warm and friendly environment. As a regular visitor to the school I am always heartened to see harmony amongst pupils who are well behaved and courteous, it feels like one big happy family. Pupils at Portfields actually enjoy the learning process, and the results speak for themselves. I feel this not only in my role as Chair of Governors but also as a parent of two, both currently at Portfields. My sons love attending school, look forward to each day and enjoy telling me about the exciting things they have been doing.

Everyone at Portfields, the Headteacher, the teaching staff and the Board of Governors are enthusiastically committed to maintaining and developing Portfields to ensure that it continues to exceed the expectations of its pupils, their parents and the government.

I hope that you and your child will very soon feel at home at Portfields. As parents we have a key role to play in the development of our children and I am sure that you will want to become as much a part of Portfields family as they are by supporting them and getting involved with the many activities and events.

Matthew Carter
Chair of Governors

OUR SCHOOL:

Classes work within Year Groups, each one corresponding with the National Curriculum designation. Our primary objective is to ensure that every child within a year group has a similar educational experience; irrespective of the class he or she is in.

Teachers plan co-operatively, encouraging an investigative, problem-solving approach through thematic methods. Teaching methodology is planned and exercised through 1:1, group or whole class teaching. Setting is undertaken as deemed appropriate.

We feel that it is essential to foster a positive relationship among children and adults, and therefore all staff are committed to making school enjoyable, as well as challenging and stimulating.

HOURS:

FOUNDATION UNIT 8.50 am – 3.10pm

KEY STAGE 1 8.50am - 12.05pm and 1.05pm - 3.15pm

* **Teaching time = 22hrs 45 min**

KEY STAGE 2 8.50am - 12.05pm and 1.05pm - 3.20pm

* **Teaching time = 23hrs 35 min**

Children should be ready to enter school at 8.50am and 13.00pm.
Those returning from home lunch early must report straight to the Main Office, at 13.00 (not before).

SAFETY OF ACCESS:

The assembly point for mornings and afternoons is the playground and when wet, straight to external classroom doors from 8.45am. We expect the children to be punctual and all latecomers to report to the Office. We expect all car drivers to consider the safety of our children. Cars should be parked outside our premises, and entrance to our Schools accessed via the pathways. The car park can accommodate Staff cars only.

INTAKE OF CHILDREN:

Foundation children are admitted in a single point of entry in the September in the year in which they are five, having previously benefited from our Induction programme if at all possible.

Parents of children living outside the area served by our school, who wish their children to attend, should contact the Headteacher. The Headteacher is proud to conduct interested parties on a tour of the school. There are specified dates for tours and an appointment can be made through the Administrative Staff.

HOME/SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP:

As a parent, you have played the most important role in the education of your child since birth. You are the first educator, and it is desirable that you continue to share in the education of your child. Our School promotes active home/school links in recognising this.

We communicate personally with all the relevant pre-school organisations prior to entry. Parents and children are also involved in a special induction programme the term before the child starts school. This includes a presentation evening and tour of The Portfields School with the Headteacher, and additional sessions for children and parents. These give parents the opportunity to understand how we approach different areas of the curriculum, whilst the children get to know the school environment. This helps children settle when they start school, and enables parents to fully appreciate the educational process.

Home Learning Policy/Homework

Home learning is another opportunity to further develop the partnership between home and school. We see it as an extension of the planned curriculum to meet the needs of individual children. Home learning will be matched and appropriate to the changing needs of the children as they pass from one phase of education to the next. We value the opportunity that home learning provides for parents and teachers, to encourage the children's progress.

Home learning will encompass a wide range of activities. This involves weekly spellings, mental maths activities, sharing books together and talking with your child about the current theme and Science questions. Later on, your child will extend at home, some of the activities begun at school. Your child will be involved in regular assignments such as further research, planning work and problem solving. Children will also have holiday homework.

The positive attitudes developed towards home learning in the first phase, will encourage your child to develop the skills and practices necessary to meet the expectations of course work, and to become an independent learner for life.

LEARNING FOUNDATIONS:

In order to benefit from the whole curriculum, the acquisition of the basic skills is very important. Our approach to reading is therefore one which recognises the importance of

structure, and the nurturing of a "love of books". Teachers hear children read regularly and we encourage the child to take home a reading book to share with parents as well as a "Key Words" booklet to develop visual memory skills. Fluent older readers are also expected to read at home/school regularly. Developmental spellings are given weekly to practise at home. They are "tested" on Fridays at school.

We aim to produce accomplished "readers for life".

Our Mathematics scheme reflects the demands of the world in which we live. As such it recognises the necessity for your child to acquire problem-solving and traditional skills, with the ability to maximise experiential learning. Mental mathematical tasks are also given weekly to practise at home, and are tested at school.

We value calligraphy and therefore have a handwriting scheme. Pens are used for writing and pencils for drawing. At present most children "join" their letters in Year 2. Handwriting sheets and pens are available for extension work at home.

We also have positive links with Ousedale Secondary School and other secondary schools, as we value continuum of education from 4+ to 18. We value each stage equally.

We also value our Governing Body and Community Group. As a parent of a child at our school, you are automatically eligible to become involved in the latter, in working in partnership with staff and parents. The Governing Body is representative of society and in relation to the school, can be likened to a Board of Directors. Vacancies for Parent Governors are brought to attention as they arise and nominations sought.

Governors and Community Group members meet regularly in supporting the school and work positively in the interests of our children.

CURRICULUM: HOW IS QUALITY ENCOURAGED AND SUSTAINED?

Throughout the learning process, it is essential that an understanding is established between teacher, parent and child, in order that all our expectations can be realised.

The teacher has the needs of each individual child in mind when planning classroom activities. The work should always aim to extend the child's capabilities, and build on previous knowledge. Teachers are aware that children produce their best work when their interest has been captured and energies channelled.

What your child learns is determined by the curriculum, which includes the National Curriculum. The curriculum is the course of learning your child undertakes at school.

We work hard to provide a structured and firm foundation for learning, with planning at the core of the individualised and whole school approach.

We have an effective system of record-keeping and pupil profiling and set pupil-targets based on this.

We value the aesthetics in our stimulating curriculum. We are able to offer specialist music tuition. All children get the opportunity to play percussion and a range of other instruments. Presentations and concerts are a regular feature of our school.

All children benefit from a structured, challenging and stimulating curriculum.

ACTIVITIES:

We run a Book shop, at various times throughout the Year. Mixed gender soccer and sports courses and various play schemes are run during term-time and in holiday periods. A wide range of lunchtime and after-school clubs are run.

P.E. AND GAMES:

You will be asked to provide your child with a draw-string bag, plimsolls, shorts and tee-shirt, or leotard, as well as a tracksuit for outdoor physical education. Kit can be left in school and taken home half-termly for washing. Unfortunately trainers are not a safe or suitable alternative for plimsolls in P.E. lessons but can be worn for outdoor Games sessions. We expect pupils to work in bare feet for indoor P.E. activities. Jewellery is not to be worn during physical education and is discouraged in school generally. *Pierced ear-rings can be "taped over" or removed at home on P.E. days. For further safety, we also request that long hair is tied back. We do most sports and take part in a variety of competitive sports.

BEHAVIOURAL POLICY:

"Our aim is to promote good behaviour, and thereby encourage a caring, responsible attitude to others in our environment".

Various members of our community were involved in formulating our policy, which recognises the crucial part played by parents, and the partnership gained, in encouraging and achieving good behaviour. You will receive a copy of "Building Better Behaviour" our behavioural policy.

All children are expected to wear Portfields uniform, which includes black shoes (not - trainers). Colour-rinsing, hair dyeing and wearing jewellery (*other than small stud or sleeper ear-rings) is against our policy.

CLOTHING:

We expect all pupils to wear school uniform. Portfields sweatshirts and polo shirts may be purchased from school and other items can be purchased in most main stores. We have

orders at various intervals throughout the year for sweatshirts and polo shirts. Gym Bags and brief-case style Reading Folders can also be purchased; these bags are normally in stock and can be obtained from the Office. The school also provides a special bag for carrying items to school as we cannot accommodate back-packs and other sports-type bags.

IN LOCO PARENTIS:

All parents are expected to report to the Main School Office. While children are on school premises, they are in the charge of the staff. If however, a child leaves school premises without permission, we cannot accept responsibility for his or her safety. We do not allow parents to approach children during the school day. This is to protect the safety of your child; as is the request for all early years' children to be taken to and from school by a known adult. For security and safety reasons all communication must be via the Main Office.

HOLIDAYS:

The Headteacher and Governors remain concerned about the removal of children for annual holidays during term time. Due to the pressure of the time scale, work missed during these periods cannot be accessed on return. These pupils are therefore disadvantaged. It is not possible for children to be given work to take with them on holiday. However, children who are ill for a sustained period may be eligible for home tuition.

MEDICAL NEEDS:

In meeting the needs of all children we are able to administer long-term medication, if given written authorisation.

Unfortunately short-term medication cannot be administered by staff. Parents can however, make arrangements to come into school to give medication themselves. Children should not bring any creams, tablets or cough sweets into school at any time.

It is essential that the school has two telephone numbers of relevant adults to contact in case of emergency.
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OUT OF SCHOOL ACTIVITIES:

A wide range of out-of-school activities and educational visits are organised. Parents are notified by letter when these are planned for a class or group.

CHARGING POLICY

The Governing Body has formally adopted a Charging policy and it is necessary for you to be aware of the following:-

The Education Reform Act 1988 requires all Governing Bodies in England and Wales to form a policy statement on charges on visits and remission of charges for educational activities, which take place in or out of school hours. The Act determined that activities which take part wholly or mainly within school hours are available to all children free of charge, with the exception of instrumental music tuition.

The tradition at Portfields Combined School has been for children to take part in a variety of organised activities, including trips which extend and broaden the children's experience. The Governors recognise this tradition and wish it to continue; therefore parents will be invited to make voluntary contributions. There is no limit to the level of voluntary contributions which may be invited, nor are there restrictions on how such contributions can be used.

The contribution may include an element to subsidise payment towards the cost of accompanying adults. It should be made clear that unless contributions are forthcoming, the activity may be cancelled. Children of parents, who decline, will not be treated differently. Unless parents are willing to continue to meet these costs, as has been the practice, the trips will cease. Any families who cannot make a contribution, or need help in meeting costs, must contact the Headteacher personally. Confidentiality will be observed.

CHARGING:

It is necessary for you to be aware of the following:-

BREAKAGES, DAMAGE AND LOSS:

Parents may be required to meet the costs of breakages or damage to school property and buildings, as a result of their child's inappropriate behaviour.

There will be a reasonable charge for loss or damage to books and (on occasion) loss of school equipment.

ART/CRAFT AND COOKING:

A nominal charge will be made to cover the costs of ingredients and materials for finished work, when the finished article is taken home.

EXAMINATION FEES:

Where pupils fail without good reason to complete the examination requirements for any public examination for which the Governing Body or LEA has paid, or is liable to

pay, or entry fee, then fees can be recovered from the parent.

RESIDENTIAL TRIPS:

These are considered by the Act to be an optional extra, and charges may be divided by the number of pupils involved. The total cost of such residential visits will include the cost of accompanying staff. These charges can be made even where the visit is taking part mainly in school hours.

PUPILS PROPERTY:

Pupils' property remains their own responsibility. The school will naturally use best endeavours for safe-keeping but cannot be held accountable.

LIAISON WITH PARENTS:

Good relationships between parents and teachers are known to be very important for children's progress and happiness in school. With this in mind, the following means of consultation and co-operation are available.

- * Parents wishing to discuss their children's progress or welfare at school may ask to see the Headteacher or Class Teachers, at some mutually convenient time. Urgent matters should be discussed with the Headteacher, and not in the classroom. The Headteacher will be available to see parents whenever she can. Please contact the Office Staff to ensure availability.
- * All parents will be invited to two termly consultations with teachers. These give opportunities for parents and teachers to discuss children's work and progress, in private. Please do not bring your child to school on consultation sessions as we do not have any crèche facilities on such occasions.
- * Teachers have a structured brief to discuss with parents at consultation evenings. In the Summer Term parents are given a final written report to keep.
- * Towards the end of the school year, the school is "open" for parents and friends to visit, and see the school at normal work. This is an opportunity for parents to see the methods and organisation used, and encourage children to accompany parents on this occasion.

A better insight into the normal working of the school is gained by those parents who give an hour or so each week to help in school. This help involves assisting with general classroom activities, and does not require professional expertise. It is better if parents are

not too involved with their own child, even though they may be in the same room.

The presence of parents in school has a very good influence on children's attitudes towards school generally, and keeps the school in close touch with the community, as well as providing extra pairs of hands. Due to the nature of the curriculum it is more difficult for parents to support in class as the children get older.

It is hoped that these opportunities will provide the desired close relationship between individual parents and children.

DESIGNATED AREA:

The traditional area from which children are drawn is that part of Newport Pagnell north of, and including part of Wolverton Road (odd numbers), east of the M1 motorway west of Westbury playing field. A place for all children living in this area is guaranteed. Other requests will be considered by the Headteacher and Governors.

SPECIAL NEEDS:

"We are committed to maintaining the climate in which all children may fulfil their potential".

In achieving this aim, we cater for the needs of all children, which includes those with a "special" educational, social or medical need. In so doing, we fully involve parents and, if appropriate, welcome the support of outside agencies.

All parties will work within our integrated approach, thus enhancing the child's educational experience, never highlighting or isolating.

SEX EDUCATION AND DRUGS EDUCATION:

Sex and Drugs Education is dealt with naturally and sensitively, as it arises within the everyday life of the school. Both areas will also be pre-planned in the curriculum when appropriate. (Parents have the right of withdrawal - see Sex Education policy).

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP:

Portfields Combined School follows the New Agreed Syllabus. A collective assembly is held daily at which a corporate act of worship plays a small part, but is sensitive to our society's varying beliefs. We like all children to share our assembly with us. We cater for, and respect, differing beliefs and faiths, and nurture this respect in our children.

As a large school, we benefit from having a particularly well qualified staff, who have specialisms in all areas of the curriculum. They recognise the theory of education and are able to successfully apply this in their everyday practice. Together as a staff, we aspire to

"excellence". Our achievement has been officially recognised by OfSTED in four superb inspection reports.

QUOTE: "Portfields provides an outstanding education for its pupils, as it did in the last inspection. High standards have been maintained. This is because of outstanding leadership and management, which means the school is well placed to maintain and build on its achievements" OfSTED 2007

QUOTE: "This is an outstanding school that meets the needs of all groups of pupils exceptionally well. Attainment is high and pupils make outstanding progress due to very effective teaching. Both pupils and parents have a high regard for the school. One parent rightly said: The school is excellent and offers a fantastic range of opportunities for children. These include French and a variety of creative and sports activities" OfSTED 2010

QUOTE: The School's leadership has created a school with a very strong drive and sense of purpose. Staff and pupils share high aspirations and a belief in success. OfSTED 2010

PORTFIELDS...

- is also a Beacon school and was one of the first 75 schools in the U.K. to be awarded Beacon status by the Secretary of State for Education, July 1998.
- was awarded a School Achievement award 2000/2001.
- is a Teacher Training Agency Partnership Promotion School recognised for excellence in initial teacher training.
- is a member of the Primary Schools Learning Network (National College for School Leadership).
- is part of the Open Schools programme hosting potential teacher candidates.
- is a Foundation school responsible for its own affairs.
- is a host school for candidates for National Qualification for Headship
- OfSTED – Outstanding School 1997
- OfSTED – Outstanding School 2002
- OfSTED – Outstanding School 2007
- OfSTED – Outstanding School 2010

Our adult: pupil ratios are favourably supported in class sizes, and with the able help of Learning Support Assistants and Nursery Nurses. Our team is made up by our School Administrator, Administrative Assistant, Mid-day Meals Supervisors, Cleaners and Caretaker; all of whom play a very important part in the everyday life of the school.

Together we endeavour to provide the very best for your child.

Although the information given in this prospectus is correct at the time of printing, it should not be assumed that no subsequent change affecting any of the matters covered, will be made before the start of, or during the school year.

Portfields is on an attractive and spacious site with superb sporting pitches, on Westbury Lane, Newport Pagnell. We welcome children from 4 to 11 years. Portfields was one of the country's first 75 Beacon Schools, and we continue to aspire to excellence.

Quotes from OfSTED 2007 and 2010:

“Portfields provides an outstanding education for its pupils, as it did at the last inspection. High standards have been maintained. This is because of outstanding leadership and management, which mean the school is well placed to maintain and build on its achievements”. OfSTED 2007

“Pupils’ achievement, personal development and well-being are all outstanding. Excellent provision in the Foundation Stage means that children’s overall standards are above average in all areas by the time they go into Year 1.” OfSTED 2007

“Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and take a pride in their achievements. Their behaviour is excellent and they have very good relationships with staff and each other. They have very positive attitudes to learning and take on responsibilities conscientiously”. OfSTED 2007

“The very positive outcomes stem from outstanding teaching, very high levels of care, support and guidance, and a wide ranging curriculum that has excellent provision for enrichment.” OfSTED 2007

“The excellent provision is firmly underpinned by the outstanding leadership and management. Rigorous monitoring of teaching ensures that teachers are given clear guidance to improve their practice and maintain high standards.” OfSTED 2007

“Achievement is outstanding and pupils’ standards in English, Mathematics and Science are exceptionally high by the time they leave Year 6. This is because of excellent teaching and very good provision for academic guidance. The latter, in particular, ensures that all pupils make similarly strong progress, regardless of ability, gender or background”. OfSTED 2007

“Pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Excellent behaviour is based on pupils’ very good relationships with each other and staff.” OfSTED 2007

“The school is innovative and is always looking to see how it can improve further, for example through its links with other schools and universities. The lack of complacency and the willingness of all to work together to raise standards is a key to the school’s success.” OfSTED 2007

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The school’s senior leadership has embedded a powerful sense of ambition across the school. The school has an excellent track record of high standards and has outstanding capacity for sustained improvement. Senior leaders work effectively with an extremely committed staff to create a school that one parent says “operates like a well-oiled

machine". OfSTED 2010

Attainment in English, Mathematics and Science has been consistently high for many years. OfSTED 2010

Pupils' behaviour is excellent. Pupils have extremely positive attitudes towards their work and each other, and are very mature and responsible. They greatly enjoy school because lessons are engaging and stimulating. OfSTED 2010

Teaching is high effective in engaging pupils. OfSTED 2010

The school's curriculum provides a rich and varied range of experiences. During the inspection, there was a continual sound of pupils playing music; they greatly enjoy singing together and many take part in physical activities after school. Pupils in Key Stage 2 are taught French by specialists, supported by a French Assistant. OfSTED 2010

The school has established an excellent reputation and is highly valued by parents and carers. OfSTED 2010

Early Years Foundation Stage:

Children make excellent progress and achieve extremely well. Their independence and confidence flourish. Staff are highly skilled at questioning to encourage children to think and share their ideas. There is a calm, purposeful and happy atmosphere, with lots of praise. Behaviour and attitudes are outstanding and these, combined with the excellent support they receive, have a highly positive impact on what children do and learn. OfSTED 2010

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FINALLY:

- We run a wealth of extra-curricular activities in clubs at lunchtime and after-school.
- Portfields have Pre-school and After-school providers on site.
- We are proud of our high sporting and musical achievements
- Specialist and inspirational French teaching empowers Portfields children to be future valuable members of the European Community

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