

Poole Grammar School

Gravel Hill, Poole, Dorset BH17 9JU

Inspection dates 1–2 December 2015

Overall effectiveness **Requires improvement**

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Require improvement
16 to 19 study programmes	Require improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Pupils' outcomes have declined since the school's previous inspection. While some recent improvements are evident, the pace of improvement is too slow.
- Pupils with high attainment on entry do not make enough progress across a range of subjects and particularly in English and science.
- The proportion of pupils who attain the higher grades of A*/A at GCSE is too low across many subjects.
- Too many teachers' expectations of what pupils are able to achieve are not high enough.
- The feedback pupils receive from some of their teachers does not enable them to understand how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve further.
- Some teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to think more deeply about their learning; this limits the progress they make.
- The 16 to 19 study programmes require improvement. The outcomes for learners vary too much across subjects.
- Leaders' views on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment are over-generous. Too little attention is paid to the impact teaching has on the progress pupils make.
- Governors do not have a clear understanding of the school's performance or the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. As a result, they provide insufficient challenge to leaders to ensure the school delivers a high standard of education.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils progress well in history and languages as a result of good teaching and leadership in these areas.
- Sixth form learners are proud of the regular academic support they provide to younger pupils, who fully appreciate this support.
- Pupils behave very well. They enjoy coming to school and feel very safe.
- Pupils are well cared for. They understand how to stay physically and mentally healthy. Pupils embrace the wide range of extra opportunities available for them.
- The individual needs of disadvantaged pupils are well known. As a result, effective support is provided and they achieve as well as their peers within the school.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and raise pupils' outcomes by:
 - having the highest expectations of what pupils are able to achieve
 - providing regular opportunities for pupils to be sufficiently challenged to think deeply about their learning
 - providing pupils with highly effective feedback, in line with the school's policy, to enable pupils to understand what they have done well and how they can improve further
 - ensuring that pupils act upon the feedback they receive to speed up the progress they make.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - leaders have an accurate evaluation of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by linking it closely to the progress pupils make
 - all subject leaders rigorously monitor and evaluate their departments to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment
 - governors urgently develop their understanding of the school's performance and rigorously challenge leaders to speed up the rate of improvement.
- An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

requires improvement

- Pupils' outcomes and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment have declined since the school's previous inspection. The expectations of some staff are too low; pupils do not make enough progress across many subjects. Some improvements have been made recently, particularly in English, but the overall pace of improvement is too slow.
- Leaders have an over-generous view of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. The processes and procedures to monitor, evaluate and improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment are not effective enough to bring about the required improvement. Too little attention is paid to the impact teaching has on pupils' outcomes.
- Subject leadership is variable in its effectiveness. Some subject leaders monitor and evaluate their departments well and ensure teaching, learning and assessment are effective. Other subject leaders, however, fail to hold teachers to account for their practice, some of which hinders pupils' progress significantly.
- As a result of recent changes to the procedures to manage the performance of staff, leaders are holding teachers more rigorously to account for pupils' outcomes. Targets set for teachers are more challenging and pay awards are withheld when necessary.
- Leaders have improved the effectiveness of their use of extra government funding for disadvantaged pupils. Each pupil's needs are well known and the funding is used well to raise their outcomes and to enable them to fully access the wide range of enrichment activities available at the school.
- The curriculum is, rightly, centred on pupils studying predominantly academic subjects. However, due to the inconsistent quality of teaching, learning and assessment, not all pupils progress as well as they should across the curriculum.
- Helpful careers guidance is threaded well throughout the school. Pupils receive effective, impartial guidance when making choices about their future GCSE studies and post-16 choices.
- Pupils relish the very wide range of extra opportunities they are able to access outside normal lessons. They speak highly of sporting opportunities and also drama and other cultural clubs and activities. Regular trips to other countries, supplemented effectively by the tutor and personal, social and health education curriculum, enable pupils to develop a good knowledge of British values. Pupils fully understand and accept people from different countries, faiths, beliefs and backgrounds. For example, pupils from different faith groups recently delivered an assembly to raise awareness of faiths and beliefs in other countries and cultures.
- The school works effectively with other educational establishments across Poole. In particular, the school works in collaboration with the local authority to develop mathematics teaching and to encourage closer working between primary and secondary schools to improve the effectiveness of the transition process.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors have a lack of understanding about school performance information and pupils' outcomes given their starting points. Governors are unclear of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. They are over-reliant on information from leaders, and do not challenge leaders sufficiently to ensure that the school provides an effective standard of education.
 - Governors have a better understanding of the use of extra government funding and the impact it has on pupils' outcomes. They are clear about their roles and responsibilities in the decision-making process for staff pay awards.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school has several lead safeguarding staff who are appropriately trained. They ensure all staff are regularly trained and updated on key safeguarding policies and practice. Staff fully understand the expectations placed on them to be highly vigilant to ensure that pupils are safe.
- The school's checks on staff and record keeping are comprehensive. Leaders work effectively with external agencies and parents to ensure pupils receive appropriate support when needed.
- The vast majority of parents who responded to the Parent View survey indicate that their child feels safe at the school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment varies widely across the school. Too many teachers' expectations of what pupils are able to achieve are not high enough.
- Where the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is less effective, teachers plan activities which do not sufficiently inspire and motivate pupils to learn well. Pupils complete the tasks given to them but often these are routine and lack challenge; the progress pupils make is limited.
- Some teachers' assessment practice, including their use of questioning, is not effective in fully probing pupils' understanding of key concepts and ideas. Pupils sometimes spend too long on tasks which are too easy for them; they do not move on to more challenging work quickly enough.
- The feedback many teachers provide to pupils is highly inconsistent. While some of this feedback is very effective, too much is either tokenistic or nonexistent. As a result, pupils are unclear of their target grades and how well they are doing, and lack clear guidance on how they can improve their learning further. A large number of teachers do not adhere to the school's marking and feedback policy.
- Relationships between teachers and pupils are positive. Pupils are highly respectful of their teachers and follow instructions quickly; this maximises learning time. Pupils work equally well on their own and with their peers.
- The most effective teaching is typified by teachers' passion and love for their subject. Teachers' very strong subject knowledge enables them to inspire pupils and motivate them to want to achieve their very best. For example, in a lesson on Chinese history, the teacher's enthusiasm and subject knowledge enabled pupils to engage passionately in the lesson. They asked searching questions and showed high levels of motivation and interest which resulted in them making exceptional progress.
- Pupils' literacy, numeracy and communication skills are well developed. Helpful links are made between subjects to reinforce key skills. For example, in a science lesson pupils applied key mathematical skills in working out areas of shapes to develop their understanding of scientific graphs. Pupils communicate very well verbally and often respond with articulate and well-thought-out ideas and opinions when sufficiently challenged and inspired to do so.
- Pupils usually receive regular homework, most of which helps them to extend their learning beyond the classroom.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are very confident and enjoy coming to school. They talk positively about their aspirations for the future and show a real determination to be successful both academically and in their future careers.
- Effective careers guidance throughout the school enables pupils fully to understand their future options. Pupils speak favourably of the support they receive when choosing GCSE options and of their post-16 options. All pupils progress to further education, employment or training.
- Pupils are very well cared for and they indicate that they have access to a range of adults to support them if they experience any issues or concerns. Through the curriculum, pupils' understanding of how to keep healthy physically, emotionally and mentally is effectively developed.
- Pupils' understanding of different types of bullying and how to keep themselves safe is well developed, in particular when using the internet. However pupils are adamant that bullying does not occur. They fully understand the inappropriateness of using derogatory, including homophobic, language.
- Sixth form learners offer helpful daily support to younger pupils. Younger pupils fully appreciate and utilise this academic and emotional support as they understand that sixth form learners have relevant and recent experience.
- Some pupils do not always fully understand how to be successful learners because teachers' feedback to them is ineffective. These pupils are unclear what grades they are aiming for and many are frustrated at their lack of progress.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.

- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site is excellent. Visitors are made to feel very welcome and pupils show great respect by saying 'hello' and holding doors open for them.
- The school site is free from litter and graffiti. Pupils are punctual to lessons and wear their uniform with pride. Pupils create a calm and purposeful environment across the school; one pupil said, 'anyone can work with anyone'.
- When pupils are challenged and inspired by their teachers they come alive in lessons and demonstrate a real thirst for learning; a buzz of excitement permeates the classroom. However, when teachers fail to challenge pupils sufficiently, they do not engage with their learning. Some pupils choose to not participate in discussions and teachers fail to tackle this.
- Very occasionally pupils do not present their work well, showing a lack of care and pride; teachers do not challenge this effectively.
- Leaders have robust and effective systems to monitor the attendance of pupils. They have a good knowledge of individual pupils' needs and provide helpful support to enable them to attend regularly; attendance levels are high.
- A very small number of pupils access some of their education at other institutions. Leaders monitor them closely to ensure they attend regularly, behave well and feel safe.
- The vast majority of parents feel that the school makes sure its pupils are well behaved; inspectors agree with this.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- Pupils' outcomes are significantly lower than at the time of the previous inspection. Despite starting at the school with levels of attainment well above the national average, not enough pupils attain the higher grades of A*/A; not all pupils manage to attain five GCSEs graded A* to C, including English and mathematics.
- Given their starting points, pupils do not make enough progress across many subjects. In particular, Year 11 pupils in 2015 underachieved in science and English.
- The progress current pupils make varies widely across year groups and subjects. Some subjects, in particular science, focus their attention on providing extra support for Year 11 pupils to enable them to catch up following previous underachievement; this often results in younger pupils not making enough progress. The school's information on pupils' current progress shows that too many pupils are still not making the academic gains of which they are capable.
- Recent changes in the leadership of English have resulted in a more cohesive department and improved quality of teaching, learning and assessment. The progress pupils now make is improving but is not yet consistently good across all year groups.
- Pupils progress well in languages and history. This is due to good leadership and teaching, learning and assessment. Teachers in these subjects have very high expectations of pupils and the quality of the work that they produce.
- Leaders have recently developed an effective system to monitor pupils' progress carefully. This enables them to have a more accurate view of how each pupil is progressing. The targets set for pupils are more aspirational, although they are not yet fully understood by all staff. As a result, some staff are using targets that, if pupils achieve them, would mean they have not made enough progress from their starting point.
- The individual needs of disadvantaged pupils, those entitled to extra government funding, are known well. Each pupil is monitored carefully and effective individual extra support for academic, social and emotional development is put in place if required. As a result, the progress made by these pupils has improved and they achieve similarly to other pupils within the school.
- Pupils have a great love of reading. They read in English lessons but also at other times of the week such as tutor time. Pupils talk fondly of the books they read both within school and for pleasure; the school library is used regularly by pupils.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make very similar progress to other pupils in the school. They receive helpful support out of lessons to develop their literacy skills. Leaders do not, however, closely monitor how effective this support is.
- The vast majority of pupils enter the school in Year 7 with high prior levels of attainment. However, teachers do not capitalise on this; they do not provide pupils with regular opportunities to think more

deeply about what they are studying to fully extend their learning; consequently, pupils do not make enough progress.

16 to 19 study programmes

require improvement

- Wide variations exist in learners' outcomes in both AS and A level courses. In some subjects pupils make very good progress, but in others they make too little. Pupils with the same starting points often have wide variation in their achievement in the same subject.
- The quality of teaching is equally variable. Much teaching inspires pupils and develops their love and passion for the subject. Other teaching does not challenge pupils sufficiently to enable them to make enough progress.
- Leaders do not have a clear understanding of the quality of teaching across the sixth form or how this impacts on the progress learners make.
- Very few learners enter the sixth form without a GCSE grade C in English and mathematics. If this happens, the school ensures effective support is in place for learners to attain this as quickly as possible.
- Leaders ensure pupils receive effective advice and guidance. The vast majority of pupils remain in the sixth form between Year 12 and Year 13. All pupils progress to higher education, training or employment following Year 13.
- Pupils behave very well and show positive attitudes to their learning. They are resilient and determined to do well. Pupils enjoy the effective regular sessions to develop wider aspects of their education such as their mental well-being, healthy lifestyles and staying safe.
- Pupils embrace a wide range of additional opportunities. In particular, they enjoy working alongside younger pupils in the school, and at other local schools, to develop their social, emotional and academic skills.
- Pupils speak highly of their work with senior leaders to influence aspects of the school. One pupil said, 'We have a voice because the headteacher listens to what we have to say.'

School details

Unique reference number	136850
Local authority	Poole
Inspection number	10007594

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Grammar (selective)
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Boys
Gender of learners in 16 to 19 study programmes	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,200
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	313
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr Ken Power
Headteacher	Andrew Baker
Telephone number	01202 692132
Website	www.poolegrammar.com
Email address	office@poolegrammar.com
Date of previous inspection	25–26 June 2014

Information about this school

- Poole Grammar School is a larger-than-average sized secondary school.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding is much lower than average. This is additional government funding to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are in the care of the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is lower than the national average.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- A very small number of pupils access some of their education at The Quay.
- Some sixth form lessons are taught in conjunction with Parkstone Grammar School for Girls.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out as a result of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills having concerns about pupils' outcomes at the school.
- Inspectors observed 52 lessons. Some of these observations were conducted jointly with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, groups of pupils and governors, and a telephone call was made to a representative of Poole local authority.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documentation including information on pupils' outcomes, the school's self-evaluation, minutes of meetings, records relating to the monitoring of teaching, learning and assessment, behaviour and the safeguarding of pupils.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work in lessons and observed their conduct at break and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors took account of 138 responses to the online Parent View survey.

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