

The Prince of Wales School

Maiden Castle Road, Dorchester, Dorset DT1 2HH

Inspection dates

21–22 June 2018

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| Overall effectiveness | Good |
| Effectiveness of leadership and management | Good |
| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment | Good |
| Personal development, behaviour and welfare | Good |
| Outcomes for pupils | Good |
| Early years provision | Good |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Outstanding |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- This is a fully inclusive school. Under the inspirational leadership of the headteacher, pupils, parents and carers, staff and governors hold a shared vision that all pupils will develop a love of learning and flourish both academically and pastorally.
- In reading, writing and mathematics, pupils make strong progress from their different starting points. Where these starting points are lower, pupils make equally strong progress towards their personal targets.
- Adults go the extra mile to ensure that learning is engaging and exciting and fires pupils' imagination. Across the curriculum, pupils write with flair, creativity and enthusiasm. However, the quality of their writing is diminished by an insufficient focus on basic skills, such as spelling and punctuation.
- In mathematics, pupils have a secure understanding of a range of concepts. Teachers enable pupils to apply their skills in problem-solving activities, but opportunities for pupils to reason about their mathematics are less developed. This is limiting the proportion of pupils, especially middle-prior-attaining pupils, working at greater depth.
- Leaders have a secure understanding of the school's strengths and areas that require further improvement. Development planning, however, is not focused sufficiently on the impact actions are to have on pupils' outcomes.
- Pupils' attendance is consistently above the national average. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent is below national comparators.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils conduct themselves well both in lessons and around the school. They are respectful of each other and celebrate people's differences.
- Safeguarding is effective. Pupils are happy in school and talk positively about the ways in which adults keep them safe. Leaders and governors have ensured that the appropriate safeguarding checks have been made. However, the records of these checks, as well as of staff training, lack the required level of rigour.
- Children get off to a strong start in the pre-school and Reception Year. They make good progress through the early years curriculum and, as a result, are well prepared for their transition to Year 1.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further increase rates of progress for all pupils, especially middle-prior-attaining pupils, by ensuring that teachers:
 - use questioning to deepen pupils’ understanding
 - provide pupils with greater opportunities to reason
 - develop pupils’ knowledge of different spelling strategies, especially in key stage 2, so that pupils’ spelling matches the quality of their writing
 - ensuring that in English and mathematics, teaching, learning and assessment focus on pupils’ development of basic skills.
- Further develop leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that development plans focus more precisely on the impact actions are to have on pupils’ outcomes and detail how this impact is to be evaluated
 - adding greater rigour to the school’s safeguarding records, as well as governors’ processes for checking that these records comply with statutory guidance.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- A period of turbulence in the school's leadership has, until recently, led to a decline in the effectiveness of this school. During this academic year, leadership has been strengthened with the appointment of a new headteacher and a number of new governors, including the chair of governors. This has brought much-needed stability to the school. The quality of teaching, learning and assessment and, consequently, pupils' outcomes, are now good.
- The headteacher provides inspirational leadership. Since his appointment in September 2017, he has had a significant impact on the culture of the school. He has raised expectations and instilled a shared sense of purpose in all members of the school community. This is recognised by staff, parents, governors and pupils.
- Leaders and governors have a secure understanding of the school's strengths and areas that require further development. This is leading to rapid improvement across the school. Although school development planning is focused on the correct priorities, there is a lack of precision in monitoring and evaluation. For example, plans do not state clearly when and how success is to be measured or by whom. Additionally, the criteria by which success is to be measured do not link directly to the impact that actions are to have on pupils' outcomes.
- The headteacher and governors have been proactive and decisive in dealing with staff underperformance. They have introduced rigorous systems for holding staff to account. Targets for improvement are linked to the needs of the school, as well as to those of individual staff members. Where performance fails to meet expectations, the headteacher provides an appropriate balance of support and challenge. This is done with compassion and sensitivity and is rooted in professional dialogue.
- The leaders of English and mathematics lead their subjects with an increasing level of skill. They have been empowered by the headteacher to take greater responsibility and autonomy in the leadership of their subjects. Leaders have a detailed understanding of the quality of teaching in their subjects and the impact this is having on pupils' outcomes. They have been proactive in making the required changes, for example in the teaching of phonics. They monitor the impact of their actions and use a range of strategies to support staff where required.
- Leaders ensure that pupil premium funding is having a positive impact on the outcomes of disadvantaged pupils. The headteacher has made an effective use of published research to develop an effective strategy for meeting pupils' emotional, social and academic needs. As result, disadvantaged pupils are making strong progress towards both their academic and personal targets.
- The leadership of special educational needs (SEN) is a strength of the school. Leaders, including the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo), have an acute understanding of the specific needs of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. Across the school, there is a resolute belief that all pupils can, and will, achieve their potential. This knowledge of the pupils, combined with high expectations, are resulting in pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities making strong progress towards the targets in their

individual support plans.

- Leaders have ensured that the school's engaging curriculum is inspiring pupils to learn. There is a breadth of coverage which is underpinned by numerous opportunities for pupils to develop their writing. Teachers plan activities which enable pupils to acquire knowledge and skills across the curriculum. As a result, pupils are making good progress in English, mathematics, humanities, science and the arts. Good use is made of the school's extensive grounds, for example the Celtic roundhouses and the meadow. Additionally, the school uses the local community to enhance its curriculum. For example, as part of the Field to Fork initiative, all pupils are regular visitors to the local farm.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is supported through the curriculum, as well as other whole-school events planned by leaders. Pupils also acquire an age-appropriate understanding of British values.
- Leaders make effective use of physical education (PE) and sport premium funding. Money is used to provide pupils with a broad range of inclusive activities. This ensures that all pupils can achieve, regardless of physical ability. The employment of a sports coach is proving effective in developing staff expertise and confidence. As a result, pupils receive high-quality PE lessons and extra-curricular opportunities.
- Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. Nearly all parents who spoke with inspectors or completed Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, said that they would recommend the school. Many parents talked of a substantial improvement in the school under the current leadership. They were also keen to describe the ways in which the school is inspiring their children to learn, for example through themed days and a whole-school trip to see Dippy the Diplodocus on his recent visit to the Dorset County Museum. Parents feel that they are fully included as part the school community. As such, they are prepared to make a full contribution to school life. For example, a several parents were recently involved in helping renovate the school's learning environment.

Governance of the school

- Although a large proportion of the governing body, including the chair of governors, have only been in post for a short time, they have quickly acquired a secure understanding of the school's position. They have wasted no time in identifying and addressing the factors having a detrimental effect on the school's performance.
- Governors are ambitious, proactive and strategic. They hold leaders to account and the minutes of their meetings show that, as their confidence and expertise have developed, they have become more challenging in their questioning. Governors are evaluative and have a secure understanding of the effectiveness of their work. Consequently, they have sought training that is matched precisely to their needs.
- The headteacher provides governors with assessment information that is in a format they can understand. Governors use a range of approaches to test the accuracy of this information. For example, they are regular visitors to the school and carry out joint monitoring activities with leaders. Additionally, they use the reports they receive from external visitors, such as the local authority adviser, to further inform their view of the

school's position.

Safeguarding

- The school's arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Pupils say that they feel safe. This is a view shared by the vast majority of parents who spoke with inspectors or completed Ofsted's online survey, Parent View.
- The headteacher, who is also the designated safeguarding lead, has an in-depth knowledge of the school's most vulnerable pupils and their families. Leaders and staff work proactively to ensure that pupils are well cared for and any barriers to their learning are minimised. The school works in partnership with a wide range of external agencies to ensure that pupils are kept safe.
- Staff understand that safeguarding is the responsibility of everyone in the school. Leaders and governors have ensured that staff have received the appropriate training and that checks on the suitability of staff to work in the school have been completed. However, at the time of the inspection, the school's records of these checks were not in line with statutory guidance. Additionally, the training of the designated safeguarding lead and one of the deputy safeguarding leads was found to be out of date. Leaders and governors had addressed these areas by the end of the inspection.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good. Teachers have a secure understanding of their pupils' needs. They use assessment information about what pupils can already do to plan exciting and engaging activities that are appropriately matched to pupils' prior learning. As a result, pupils make good progress from their different starting points.
- Teachers have a well-developed understanding of the national curriculum expectations for the ages they teach. They make extensive use of moderation opportunities in order to ensure that their assessments of pupils' attainment are accurate.
- Teachers and teaching assistants foster strong relationships with pupils. These are based on mutual respect and high expectations. Pupils are articulate. They are able to talk about their learning and how it can be improved. In lessons and around the school, success is celebrated. This is done through class discussions, the sharing of work and whole-school displays, for example the 'Writing Hall of Fame'.
- Adults make good use of questioning to explore pupils' understanding. This enables them to adapt their teaching accordingly. However, the use of questioning to deepen pupils' understanding is more variable. This is limiting the progress of pupils, especially middle-prior-attaining pupils, towards the higher standards.
- Teaching assistants are highly skilled. They use their in-depth knowledge of the pupils they work with to ensure that they are able to access learning at a level appropriate to their needs. Teaching assistants provide pupils with a suitable amount of support in order to aid their learning without stifling their independence. Consequently, pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make good progress towards their personal targets.
- The teaching of phonics is a strength. Staff have good subject knowledge and use this

to model sounds accurately. Children across early years and pupils in key stage 1 have a secure understanding of phonics and use this knowledge in both their reading and spelling.

- In reading, the school's focus on high-quality texts is having a positive impact on pupils' understanding and use of more complex vocabulary. Pupils enjoy reading and read regularly both at home and at school. In reading sessions, teachers develop pupils' fluency as well as their comprehension. Pupils read with expression and an age-appropriate use of higher order reading skills, such as inference and deduction.
- Teachers have instilled in pupils a love of writing. They use a rich range of stimuli, including trips, visitors and themed events, to enthuse pupils and make them want to write. Teachers provide pupils with frequent opportunities to write at length across different subjects and genres. Pupils understand how their use of vocabulary and language devices, such as metaphor and imagery, can affect the reader. For example, one boy in Year 4 told an inspector how he had written 'whispered darkly' to create a sense of threat and menace.
- While pupils have a secure understanding of composition and effect, their use of basic spelling and punctuation is not as developed. Pupils do not have a sufficient understanding of different spelling strategies and, as a result, rely too heavily on their knowledge of phonics to spell unknown words. This is especially the case in key stage 2. Teachers' feedback too often does not focus sufficiently on this element of pupils' writing. This is having a detrimental effect on what is otherwise high-quality writing.
- In mathematics, pupils' skills and understanding of different concepts are in line with expectations for their age. Teachers have good subject knowledge. They plan activities that secure pupils' understanding and enable pupils to apply their skills through problem solving. However, opportunities for pupils to reason and explain their mathematical thinking are variable across the school. This is limiting the proportion of pupils working at the higher standards in mathematics.
- In other subjects, teachers look for every opportunity to supplement the curriculum with activities and events that inspire pupils and fire their imagination. Work in books shows that teachers' high expectations extend across the curriculum, for example in the high-quality artwork seen in pupils' sketch books.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The Prince of Wales School is highly inclusive. Pupils of all abilities work and play together. Leaders also ensure that school events are accessible for all. For example, at the school's forthcoming sports day, all pupils will participate in activities such as boccia, sitting volleyball and table cricket.
- Leaders actively promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through the curriculum and whole-school events. For example, during the inspection, pupils were participating in a global awareness fortnight linked to the FIFA World Cup. As a part of this, pupils were learning about different countries and reflecting upon

how life differs for children in other parts of the world.

- Pupils say that they feel safe. They recognise the different ways in which school staff keep them safe, for example through e-safety lessons and a trip to SafeWise in Bournemouth.
- Pupils say that there is very little bullying. All of the pupils spoken to said that they had a trusted adult in school and were confident that, should they have any concerns, these would be dealt with swiftly and effectively. This was a view shared by the vast majority of parents.
- Older pupils value the responsibility they are given to care for younger pupils in the school, for example as 'playtime wardens' and 'buddies' to children in Reception. These further support the school's inclusivity and sense of community.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are well mannered, polite and courteous. They are wholly supportive of each other and keen to celebrate their peers' successes.
- Pupils display an enthusiasm for learning. The vast majority listen attentively when adults are speaking and are willing to discuss their work with visitors. At breaktimes and lunchtimes, pupils conduct themselves well. They play together, often with older pupils involving the younger ones in their games.
- Pupils enjoy school. As one pupil told an inspector, 'School is inspiring us. Teachers make learning fun.' Consequently, pupils' attendance is consistently above the national average. Similarly, the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent is below the national average. Where pupils' absence rates are higher, this is for legitimate reasons, for example attendance at medical appointments.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- In 2017, published assessment information for pupils at the end of Year 2 showed that in reading, writing and mathematics, pupils' progress was broadly in line with that of other pupils nationally with similar starting points. At the end of Reception Year, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development was broadly in line with the national average. The proportion of children assessed as exceeding the early learning goals in mathematics and writing was below the national average.
- In all year groups, inspection evidence confirms that current pupils are making good progress from their starting points. This is the case for reading, writing and mathematics, as well as other subjects across the curriculum. Consequently, outcomes for the end of early years and key stage 1 are set to be higher in 2018. Leaders' aspirations are to now further increase rates of progress for all pupils, and especially middle-prior-attaining pupils. This will lead to higher proportions working above the expectations for their age.
- By the end of Year 4, the majority of pupils are working at, or above, the expectations for their age. They are well prepared for their transition to middle school.

- For the past two years, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check has been in line with the national average. As a result of raised expectations and more precise teaching, the proportion meeting the standard is set to be higher for pupils currently in Year 1.
- Disadvantaged pupils, and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, are making good progress from their starting points. Well-trained and knowledgeable staff are providing effective support, which has been matched carefully to pupils' needs.

Early years provision

Good

- Children get off to a strong start in the well-led pre-school provision. They continue their development as they progress through Reception Year so that, by the end of early years, they are well prepared for their transition to Year 1.
- Children, including those who are disadvantaged and those who have SEN and/or disabilities, are making good progress. The majority of children join the school with knowledge and skills in line with those that are typical for their age. A number of children enter above this. Assessment information for recent years shows that, while the proportion of children meeting the early learning goals for reading, writing and mathematics has been broadly in line with the national average, the proportion exceeding these has been lower. This has not represented strong progress for the school's most able children. However, data for children currently in Reception shows that, this year, the proportion working above expectations for their age is higher.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in early years is good. Adults have high expectations for what children can achieve and plan activities that are matched precisely to their needs. Adults use questioning effectively to develop and extend children's learning. Consequently, children make strong gains in their development of early reading, writing and mathematical skills.
- Adults ensure that children have opportunities to practise their skills when working independently. For example, in pre-school, one boy was exploring his mathematical understanding of scales by getting different numbers of objects to balance. In Reception, one girl was writing independently on the whiteboard. She was confident in explaining how she had used her phonic knowledge to spell unknown words.
- Early years staff have developed learning environments, both inside and outside, that capture children's imagination and make them want to learn. Children enjoy the activities that adults provide for them. In both pre-school and Reception, children show levels of concentration and resilience appropriate to their stage of development.
- Children behave well across early years. Staff have fostered relationships that are consistently warm and positive. There are well-established routines and children feel secure because they know exactly what is expected of them. Children are encouraged to care for and help each other. As a result, children flourish and early years is a happy and nurturing place to be.
- Parents are active participants in their children's learning. They talk positively about the transitions between pre-school and Reception, and Reception and Year 1. They feel that they receive an appropriate amount of information about what their children are learning and how they can be supported.

- Safeguarding is effective in early years and all statutory duties are met. Leaders have ensured that staff have the appropriate level of training, for example in paediatric first aid.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 113747 |
| Local authority | Dorset |
| Inspection number | 10048163 |

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.

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| Type of school | First |
| School category | Maintained |
| Age range of pupils | 2 to 9 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 158 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Martin Butcher |
| Headteacher | Gary Spracklen |
| Telephone number | 01305 257120 |
| Website | www.princeofwales.dorset.sch.uk |
| Email address | office@princeofwales.dorset.sch.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 13 February 2008 |

Information about this school

- The Prince of Wales School is smaller than the average-sized first school. It caters for children between the ages of two and nine. There are seven classes, two in the pre-school and one per year from Reception to Year 4.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British background and the proportion who speak English as an additional language is well below the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported through pupil premium funding is well below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is broadly in line with the national average. The school has a resource base which caters for pupils who have physical disabilities. The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan is well above the national average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited classrooms to observe pupils' learning. Several of these visits were carried out jointly with the headteacher and other school leaders.
- Discussions were held with school leaders, staff, members of the governing body (including the chair of governors), and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at the school's evaluation of its own performance, its improvement plan, a number of key school policies and the minutes of meetings of the governing body. They also considered a range of documentation in relation to child protection, safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils throughout the inspection to seek their views and listened to a selection of them read.
- Inspectors spoke with a number of parents during the inspection and took account of 74 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View.

Inspection team

Jonathan Dyer, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Andrew Brown

Ofsted Inspector

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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. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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