

Inspection of a good school: Parley First School

Glenmoor Road, Ferndown, Dorset BH22 8QE

Inspection dates:

3–4 March 2020

Outcome

Parley First School continues to be a good school.

However, inspectors have some concerns that one or more areas may be declining, as set out below.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils value the positive relationships that they share with staff, describing their teachers as caring. They understand the boundaries that are set, commenting that although their 'teachers have a strict side, they are only strict when they have to be'. Pupils feel secure, safe and well looked after.

Playtimes are energetic and well supervised. Pupils engage enthusiastically, enjoying activities such as climbing, playing outdoor musical instruments and using the see-saw. They cooperate exceptionally well with one another, making social times a pleasure for all.

Bullying is rare and only happens very occasionally. Pupils wisely acknowledge that: 'We all have ups and downs, but in the end, everyone makes up.' They say adults offer support when required but that often 'we can sort things out for ourselves'.

Pupils try hard in everything they do, behave well and are keen to learn. However, they are not always clear what it is they need to remember or which skill they are aiming to master. This is because teachers are unclear about which curricular aspects need to be particularly emphasised. Although pupils listen well and engage readily, their efforts are not harnessed well enough. Some do not achieve as well as they might.

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

Senior leaders have established a broad and interesting curriculum. Staff know which topics or themes to cover and in which order. Subject leaders are beginning to make thoughtful decisions about how the curriculum is sequenced. For example, in history, staff make sure that pupils do not repeat learning when they move on into Year 5 in local schools. Across the local partnership, subject leaders have liaised well so as to avoid any overlap in national curriculum content at pupils' point of transfer. Nevertheless, they have not considered which key aspects pupils need to remember to aid their future learning. Consequently, pupils, including the disadvantaged, are not achieving as well as leaders

intend. Standards at the end of key stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics in 2019 were below those seen nationally. Standards in writing are particularly low.

Pupils cover the full range of national curriculum subjects. Learning times are uninterrupted as pupils listen well and try hard. However, teachers do not always identify exactly what it is that pupils need to know by the end of each topic. Staff are not well versed in what to emphasise or why. For instance, in history, teachers place too little emphasis on the historical content that pupils need to remember.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) who attend 'The Pod' benefit from the expertise of staff. However, in the main school, pupils with SEND find it more difficult to access the tasks that are set for them. Sometimes, activities chosen for pupils who are struggling or those pupils with SEND do not quite meet their needs.

Since the last inspection, there has been a determined effort to improve the teaching of reading. This has made a positive difference. The school employs a rigorous and structured approach to the teaching of phonics. Staff follow the school's programme closely and know which sounds to teach when. Pupils' reading books are carefully matched to their reading ability. They read accurately, using their skills to work out tricky words. However, for some pupils, particularly those that need to catch up, fluency when reading aloud has yet to take hold. Pupils have too few opportunities to read to adults and rehearse their skills. Furthermore, they have yet to develop a secure love of reading. Storytelling initiatives are very new, and pupils do not yet recall their favourite stories or rhymes readily.

Pupils, including children in the early years, thoroughly enjoy the range of activities on offer. They behave well and have positive relationships with adults. The school provides a rich menu of additional activities. Staff make sure that there is equality of opportunity, such as ensuring that every pupil represents the school in a sporting event by the time they leave. The Year 4 residential trip is a highlight for many.

At the heart of the school's work is everyone's well-being. Parents and staff agree. One parent, reflecting the views of many, commented: 'Children develop a real empathy for others and a sense of humility, which is driven by the caring attitude of staff and the headteacher.' Leaders are mindful of staff workload and keep a close watch on this aspect. Staff are appreciative of leaders' thoughtfulness when introducing new initiatives. All agree that everyone associated with this school supports one another.

In discussion with the headteacher, we agreed that the effectiveness of curriculum planning on pupils' attainment, including for pupils with SEND, may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff keep abreast of current safeguarding issues. They follow the school's policy for managing concerns. Adults know what to do if they are worried about a child.

If concerns arise, staff report to the school's designated safeguarding lead and make sure that pertinent information is shared. Leaders respond promptly, taking proportionate action. They make excellent use of early help services, signposting appropriate external support. Consequently, families are supported from the earliest stage and this makes a positive difference. Parents are confident that there is always someone on hand to support their child.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders are at an early stage in developing the school's curriculum. Subject leaders have not identified the content that pupils need to remember. In a range of subjects, pupils, including those with SEND, do not build their knowledge securely. Leaders need to ensure that more pupils achieve well, including in the core subjects of writing and mathematics.
- Pupils' reading fluency is underdeveloped. Pupils, including those who need to catch up, do not read widely and often. Leaders need to ensure that pupils receive plentiful opportunities to rehearse and practice their reading skills.
- Pupils do not recall their favourite stories readily. They are not yet exposed to a wide range of high-quality literature. Leaders need to ensure that pupils develop a love of reading so that they can talk enthusiastically about the books and authors they enjoy.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good on 9–10 February 2016.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	113682
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	10122382
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	5 to 9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	311
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jonathan Heath
Headteacher	John Bagwell
Website	www.parley.dorset.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	9–10 February 2016

Information about this school

- Parley First School is a larger-than-average-sized primary school. The school is expanding and is currently exceeding its planned admission number.
- The school operates a before- and after-school club each day. It offers wraparound care for pupils who attend the school.
- The deputy headteacher is due to leave at the end of this academic year.
- The governing body has changed considerably since the last inspection. Approximately 50% of the governing body comprises newly recruited governors. The chair of the governing body was appointed in September 2019.
- In September 2018, the school opened a resource provision for pupils with SEND. This is known as 'The Pod'. All pupils who attend this provision have an education, health and care plan and have complex communication difficulties. The provision can cater for up to 10 pupils. Currently there are five pupils on roll from Year 1 to Year 4.
- The school uses two alternative providers, Horserenity and Equilibrium.

Information about this inspection

- I met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and all teaching staff who were present during the inspection.
- I did deep dives in these subjects: reading, writing and history. I talked to subject leaders, staff and pupils, visited lessons, heard some pupils read and looked at pupils' work.
- The school's safeguarding arrangements were reviewed. I met with the school's designated safeguarding lead, scrutinised the school's recruitment checks and considered how well adults in the school act on emerging concerns about pupils' welfare.
- A meeting was held with the chair of the governing body and two other governors. I also spoke to a local authority representative on the telephone.
- I met with pupils to discuss their views and talked to pupils informally about the school. No pupils responded to Ofsted's online pupil survey.
- I took account of the 79 responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey, and 36 additional free-text responses. The views of 37 members of staff who responded to Ofsted's staff survey were considered.
- I looked at documentation provided by the school. This included the school's own development plan and documentation related to admissions.

Inspection team

Elizabeth Farr, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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