

Inspection of a good school: Dorchester Primary School

Dorchester Road, Bransholme, Hull, HU7 6AH

Inspection dates:

15–16 July 2021

Outcome

Dorchester Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Dorchester is an inclusive and happy school where pupils get the help they need to achieve well. This view is shared by all of the pupils inspectors spoke to. One pupil told inspectors that 'teachers are really caring, we know if we ask for help, we will get it'.

Pupils enjoy the positions of responsibility they hold. Democratically elected roles, such as house captains and school councillors, enable pupils to contribute purposefully to school life. Pupils spoke with enthusiasm about the school garden they are developing and of their plans for the fruit and vegetables they will grow. School council representatives attend School Stakeholder Group (SSG) meetings to share their views. They feel that they are being listened to and that their views help leaders to improve the school. Pupils take their roles seriously. They describe character traits such as fairness and loyalty as key to holding these roles.

Pupils are clear about the school rules. They speak with great pride about 'being their best self'. Pupils describe behaviour around school as good. They recognise that some pupils argue on the playground but say that teachers sort this out quickly.

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

Leaders have created an ambitious curriculum that sets out clearly what pupils should learn and when. In subjects such as history, teachers use assessment skilfully to find out what pupils know before they start to teach a new unit of work. In other curriculum areas, such as design technology (DT), the curriculum is improving rapidly. Leaders have recently re-organised the DT curriculum so that learning is organised in a way that helps pupils to remember more. Leaders have ensured that pupils have plenty of opportunities to design, make and evaluate projects using different materials. Strong, cross-curricular links with subjects, such as science, give pupils the opportunity to apply their skills and knowledge when making products. However, the ways that teachers capture what pupils know and can do in DT is not as well established as it is in other curriculum areas. The

'hook' activity at the start of each topic does not help teachers to capture accurately what pupils already know and can do.

Leaders have rightly reorganised their curriculum to make up for learning that has been lost during the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic. In the short term, leaders have placed a greater focus on subjects such as English and mathematics. Learning in other subjects has been reordered to take account of this.

The mathematics curriculum is clearly sequenced. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to continually revisit and review previous learning. This is helping pupils to remember their new learning. Leaders ensure there is a focus on developing pupils' mathematical vocabulary. Pupils now use mathematical vocabulary with accuracy. In the early years, mathematics is a high priority. Daily 'carpet time' is used to teach children mathematical concepts. Leaders ensure that opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical understanding are provided in the activities pupils complete.

The help that leaders provide for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is a strength of the school. Knowledgeable and highly trained leaders ensure that pupils get the support they need to achieve. Leaders have established 'hive' provision for pupils who need it. These well-resourced, intimate settings provide the intense support that a significant minority of pupils need. Leaders work closely with teachers to ensure the curriculum mirrors that of their class so that when pupils return to the classroom it is a smooth and successful transition.

Leaders have continued to prioritise the teaching of phonics and reading. Children are taught to read as soon as they start in the early years. Leaders provide 'chatterpacks' to parents so that they have the age-appropriate resources they need to support their child's reading. As soon as children start school, leaders check their speech and language needs so that extra help can be provided, where it is required. Leaders' subject monitoring has led to a consistent and successful approach to the teaching of phonics across the early years and key stage 1. Teachers provide lots of opportunities for pupils to rehearse and say the sounds they are learning aloud, which helps them to remember them.

Leaders use assessment well to ensure that the books pupils read match the sounds they already know. However, it has been some time since phonics training was revisited. As a result, the approach adults take when supporting pupils to read is inconsistent. In these sessions, adults do not use strategies from the school's approach to reading, which means pupils are not as well supported as they might be.

Whole class reading books are planned across the year to help foster pupils' love of reading. Leaders ensure that the books they read with pupils include stories from a range of different cultures. Leaders use these texts to promote the fundamental British values of tolerance and respect.

Pupils enjoy learning. They have positive relationships with their teachers and eagerly participate in lessons. Where pupils struggle to focus on their learning, staff are skilled at supporting them to re-engage. As a result, classrooms are productive places where learning thrives.

During the inspection, a very small minority of parents said that bullying is not always dealt with effectively. Inspection evidence demonstrates that when incidents of bullying occur, they are investigated and resolved by staff quickly. Pupils speak positively about the way adults help them sort out their differences. Pupils said that 'teachers keep us safe and make learning fun'.

Despite the restrictions caused by the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic, leaders have ensured that pupils continue to experience exciting, learning opportunities. These include whole school science workshops, drama events and visits to local farms. Newly introduced initiatives, such as 'The Dorchester Dozen', set out twelve learning experiences that pupils must experience before they leave school. These include flying a kite at the seaside and taking a boat trip on the river.

The SSG and trustees know the school well. They work closely with leaders and have a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The school improvement team in the trust continue to support leaders to develop their curriculum through regular visits and challenge meetings. Leaders at all levels do all they can to manage teachers' workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that all the necessary checks have been made on staff that work with pupils.

Safeguarding training is reviewed regularly. Staff have the skills and knowledge they need to identify pupils who may be at risk. Safeguarding records are thorough and well maintained. Strong communication between staff ensures that concerns are shared swiftly. As a result, teachers feel well informed about safeguarding matters.

When a safeguarding issue occurs, leaders react quickly. They are tenacious in securing support from outside agencies. Leaders hold regular meetings to review the needs of pupils to ensure that they get the help they need.

Leaders have planned a curriculum that teaches children how to stay safe online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders use of assessment varies across the curriculum. In wider curriculum subjects, where curriculum developments are newer, assessment does not tell teachers what pupils know and can do. This means, in subjects such as design and technology, teachers do not have an accurate picture of pupils' capabilities. Leaders should ensure that assessment approaches in all subjects are equally developed so that assessment captures what pupils know and can do accurately.
- Despite reading being a continued priority for leaders, staff training is outdated. This means that, although phonics teaching, overall, is improving, some adults do not

support pupils in the early stages of reading by using the most efficient strategies. Leaders should ensure that all staff receive up-to-date training so that they have the phonics knowledge to support all pupils with their reading.

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 outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that a good school could now be better than good, or 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 30 June and 1 July 2015

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	139525
Local authority	Kingston Upon Hull City Council
Inspection number	10183963
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	331
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Graham Wilson
Headteacher	Stuart Mills
Website	www.dorchesterprimary.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	30 June and 1 July 2015

Information about this school

- The school is slightly larger than the average primary school.
- The school became part of the Hull Collaborative Academy Trust on 1 April 2015.
- A new headteacher joined the school in April 2020.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is much higher than national averages.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds and speak English as their first language.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors conducted deep dives in mathematics, reading, design and technology, and history. As part of these deep dives, inspectors met with leaders and reviewed their curriculum plans. Inspectors spoke with groups of pupils, visited lessons and reviewed pupils' work. Inspectors also spoke with teachers of the lessons that they had visited.
- Inspectors heard pupils read to a familiar adult.

- The inspection team met with a number of parents at the start of the school day to canvass their views of the school.
- Inspectors considered 17 responses received through Ofsted’s online questionnaire, Parent View, including 16 free-text responses. Given the low number of responses to the online questionnaire, inspectors also reviewed the school’s own survey of parent views that had been completed in June 2021. Inspectors also considered 45 responses to Ofsted’s staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors observed pupils’ behaviour at different times of the school day, including during lessons, at breaktime, lunchtime and during breakfast club.
- Inspectors scrutinised leaders’ behaviour records, including records relating to bullying incidents. Inspectors spoke to pupils about their behaviour and bullying.
- Inspectors met with the designated safeguarding lead and reviewed the single central register as well as policies and school records. Inspectors spoke to staff across the school with a variety of roles about the actions they take to keep pupils safe.
- Inspectors met other leaders in school, including the special educational needs coordinators and early years leader.
- Inspectors met with two members of the SSG and three trustees, including the Chair and Chief Executive Officer.

Inspection team

Chris Pearce, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Andrea Batley

Her Majesty's Inspector

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