

Inspection of a good school: Sherborne Primary School

Harbour Way, Sherborne, Dorset DT9 4AJ

Inspection dates:

13 and 14 October 2021

Outcome

Sherborne Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are at the centre of this inclusive town school. Leaders are determined that all pupils reach their full potential. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the academic and pastoral provision provided.

Pupils enjoy coming to school. They say that school is a positive place to be. Pupils appreciate the wide range of opportunities, including forest school, provided beyond the classroom. These support them with their personal development. Pupils are confident and mature. They agree that everyone looks out for each other.

Staff have high expectations of behaviour. Pupils behave well in lessons and during social times. Low-level disruption is rare. Pupils say that bullying does not happen very often, but when it does, staff take it seriously.

Pupils are polite and caring. They develop a positive understanding of respect and tolerance, recognising that there are a variety of cultures and beliefs. They understand that people are different, but that it is good to be different. Pupils have developed strong relationships with staff where they feel valued and appreciated.

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

Leaders are ambitious and aim to provide pupils with opportunities to develop resilience and become lifelong learners. Staff say that leaders have a strong focus on ensuring that adults and pupils are well cared for and valued.

Leaders prioritise reading. Younger children learn to read well through the consistent approach to the teaching of phonics. Staff expose children to a variety of stories, rhymes and songs to develop their communication skills. Well-trained staff make frequent checks on pupils who are struggling to keep up. They provide support early so pupils do not fall behind. Books are matched to the letters and sounds that pupils are learning. As a result, pupils are developing into confident and competent readers.

Older pupils say that they love reading. They understand why it is important to be able to read. They appreciate the recent investment in books, which provides them with a wide choice. Pupils are keen to discuss texts with adults. They are motivated through rewards and feel challenged by their teachers to read widely.

The mathematics curriculum has been carefully organised by staff. This leads to high levels of pupil engagement, including for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders have focused on pupils' basic understanding of key aspects of place value and number. Pupils say that teachers make learning 'fun'. Pupils feel challenged and well prepared for the activities they undertake. In the early years, staff provide opportunities for children to develop their mathematical language. Through effective talk from adults, children's understanding of new concepts is developed well.

Leaders have worked diligently on planning the wider curriculum. However, in some subjects, what children need to know is not clear enough. For example, in computing, although leaders have outlined the outcomes that they want pupils to get to, the steps to achieve these are not understood well enough by the pupils. Pupils struggled to recall what they had learned and could not explain their learning over time. Staff are not using assessment effectively to fully understand what pupils know and can do.

Relationships between staff and pupils are based on mutual respect. Pupils show positive attitudes to their learning. Interruptions to learning are rare.

Staff ensure that pupils with SEND are supported well. Leaders carefully monitor pupils' progress and involve parents in their children's learning. Learning across the curriculum is skilfully adapted to meet pupils' needs. Consequently, pupils with SEND thrive in a supportive environment. Parents say that the school understands these children's individual needs and 'enables children to flourish'.

Staff carefully plan exciting and memorable experiences that support pupils' personal development. They deliberately seek out opportunities to involve pupils in the local community, for example singing to adults with learning disabilities. Pupils value these experiences and talk about them enthusiastically. The school develops pupils' character and resilience through a well-structured curriculum for personal, social, emotional, health and economic education.

Governors share the ambition of school leaders. They are knowledgeable about the school's work to improve the education for all pupils. Governors are confident to challenge leaders to ensure that the decisions made are in the best interests of pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Keeping children safe is at the forefront of the school's work. Leaders ensure that all staff are knowledgeable and receive frequent, up-to-date safeguarding training. Staff

understand what to do if they are worried about a pupil. They know that leaders will take their concerns seriously.

Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations. For example, they can explain, in detail, how to stay safe online. They know who to go to if they have a worry or concern. Leaders have ensured that the curriculum supports pupils' understanding of risk.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects within the wider curriculum, the choice of key content and knowledge is not explicit enough. It is not clear what pupils should know and by when. Leaders need to ensure that staff identify the component steps and prioritise essential knowledge so all pupils have the building blocks for future learning.
- Assessment information in some subjects is not checking what pupils know and can do. As a result, some pupils have gaps in their learning. Leaders need to ensure that assessment is used to inform pupils' learning over time so they know more and remember more of the intended curriculum.

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 evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, 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 deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in November 2012.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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

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| Unique reference number | 144417 |
| Local authority | Dorset |
| Inspection number | 10200917 |
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Academy converter |
| Age range of pupils | 4 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 310 |
| Appropriate authority | Board of trustees |
| Chair of trust | Nigel Rees |
| Headteacher | Ian Bartle |
| Website | www.sherbornepri.dorset.sch.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | Not previously inspected |

Information about this school

- The school joined the Sherborne Area Schools Trust in June 2017. The current headteacher took up post in September 2015.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator, the deputy chief executive officer, groups of staff and representatives from the local governing body.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and computing. For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited samples of lessons, spoke to teachers and pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector listened to pupils from Years 1, 2 and 3 read to an adult.

- The inspector considered how well the school protects pupils and keeps them safe.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site. Additionally, the inspector spoke with pupils to discuss their views on the school.
- The inspector considered 50 responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, including 35 free-text responses, 22 responses to the pupil online survey and 42 responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Heather Barraclough, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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