

# Inspection of The Grange School

Redvers Road, Christchurch, Dorset, BH23 3AU

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Inspection dates: 30 November–1 December 2021

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	Inadequate

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

The Grange School has improved considerably since the previous inspection. Over the last three years, the head of school has steadily and determinedly insisted that all staff expect more of pupils. Consequently, teachers now have high aspirations for pupils. Following her example, they see the potential in all pupils, no matter what their background or circumstances. Parents recognise this and appreciate it.

Teachers apply the school's behaviour rules consistently. Teachers and pupils respect each other. Pupils respond well to teachers' calm approach. As a result, pupils behave well in lessons and around the school site. There is little bullying, but it does sometimes happen. Pupils report that teachers take incidents of bullying seriously and act quickly to stop them.

Pupils know that staff care for them. Staff are well trained. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic staff have checked consistently on pupils' well-being. The Grange is a small school. As one pupil put it, 'everyone knows everyone else here'. As a result of the calm, friendly character of the school, pupils feel safe and secure.

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

The executive headteacher and the head of school work together very effectively. They have improved the school quickly while keeping a close eye on staff well-being.

Leaders have ensured that pupils in Years 7 to 9 study a broad curriculum that includes a broad range of subjects. Pupils are learning well. However, in a small minority of subjects that were reintroduced recently, pupils have gaps in their knowledge. Teachers are helping pupils to catch up in these subjects.

Leaders have improved the languages curriculum. As a result, a growing number of pupils choose to study languages at GCSE level. The proportion of pupils studying the English Baccalaureate suite of academic subjects is increasing rapidly.

Curriculum leaders work with their teams to identify the key ideas in each subject. Consequently, teachers follow detailed curriculum plans and provide pupils with suitable work. Teachers use assessment well to help them plan pupils' learning.

Senior leaders place a high priority on reading. Leaders' initiatives to improve pupils' reading skills, and their speaking skills, have hit home successfully. Pupils learn and remember well in mathematics. Nevertheless, pupils are not always confident when asked to apply their mathematical skills in other subjects.

Pupils behave well. The great majority try hard in lessons and listen carefully to their teachers. When pupils find it difficult to meet teachers' behaviour expectations, leaders take action. This helps these pupils improve their conduct.

Leaders continually look for opportunities to build pupils' self-confidence. They have devised a 'character curriculum' that promotes positive personal traits. Pupils reflect on different religious views. They talk sensitively about diversity and tolerance. Pupils take part in many clubs and events. For example, the school choir is about to perform its first Christmas concert.

The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships. Pupils receive suitable careers education. However, a few pupils are still unclear about the range of opportunities available to them when they leave.

Leaders of the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) identify pupils' needs early. They advise staff how to meet these needs and so help pupils with SEND to achieve well.

Although leaders have a well-thought-through strategy for supporting disadvantaged pupils, a minority of these pupils find it difficult to attend school regularly. This hinders their learning.

The trust has supported the school strongly. This is a significant factor in its improvement. Members of the trust board and governors have challenged trust leaders to improve the school quickly. Trust leaders have delivered. Their vision for the curriculum is shared by staff. Consequently, even though change has been demanding, staff morale remains high.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The head of school ensures that all staff are trained to look out for signs that pupils may not be happy and safe. Leaders communicate quickly and effectively with social services and other agencies to secure help for pupils when they need it.

The school operates a detailed system for checking that only suitable staff are appointed. The trust board oversees this system diligently.

Senior leaders set out clear messages that raise pupils' awareness of sexual harassment. For example, pupils say the message 'there is no such thing as banter' is promoted strongly by all staff.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Curriculum plans across all subjects contain references to mathematical skills. However, this work is not developed fully, and so pupils lack confidence in applying their mathematical knowledge in subjects other than mathematics.

Leaders need to ensure that teachers reinforce pupils' mathematical skills appropriately across all subjects.

- Leaders have established an appropriate careers education strategy. Even so, a few pupils are unsure about the range of further and higher education courses that they could apply for. Leaders should ensure that careers guidance provides greater clarity for these pupils.
- The rate of attendance of a minority of disadvantaged pupils is too low. This stops these pupils from receiving the extra help the school offers them. Senior leaders need to ensure that these pupils attend school regularly so that they can learn and remember more of the curriculum.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	141378
<b>Local authority</b>	Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole
<b>Inspection number</b>	10200985
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	377
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Lynda Clarke
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jy Taylor (Executive Headteacher) Liz Garman (Head of School)
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.thegrangeschool.com">www.thegrangeschool.com</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	14–15 March 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The chair of the trust board was appointed in September 2021.
- The trust board delegates some responsibilities to a local advisory board that has direct oversight of the school on its behalf.
- The chief executive officer of the trust was appointed in autumn 2018, after the previous inspection.
- The head of school joined the school after the previous inspection. Initially this was part of a joint co-headship. For the last two and a half years she has had responsibility for the school.
- In September 2021, the trust formally introduced a shared leadership structure with Twynham School. Although the head of school retains day-to-day oversight, the executive headteacher has taken on formal responsibility for the school.
- Although the school is registered for pupils aged 11 to 19, it no longer has post-16 students on roll and does not offer post-16 courses.
- The school uses three alternative providers. Each of these providers is registered.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

In accordance with section 13(5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken this into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors met with the chair of the trust board and four governors, the chief executive officer of the trust and his deputy, the executive headteacher, the head of school and members of the leadership team.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, science, art and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors scrutinised the school's policies relating to safeguarding and spoke with the designated safeguarding leader and her deputy. Inspectors considered records of the pre-employment suitability checks the school makes on its staff. Inspectors asked pupils for their opinions about safety, behaviour and bullying, and considered parents' responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey.
- Inspectors met with a range of staff and spoke to members of the site team. Meetings were held with a group of Year 10 girls and a group of Year 9 boys.

## Inspection team

Paul Williams, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Colin Logan

Ofsted Inspector

Gary Lewis

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
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