

Inspection of a good school: Christchurch Junior School

Clarendon Road, Christchurch, Dorset BH23 2AA

Inspection dates:

4 and 5 May 2022

Outcome

Christchurch Junior School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy school and attend well. Staff take time to get to know pupils as individuals. This helps pupils settle into junior school quickly and build positive relationships with one another. Pupils are respectful. They value the school's inclusivity. Pupils get along at social times well. Bullying is rare. If there are disagreements, pupils are confident that staff will sort it out.

Pupils are enthusiastic about their learning. They study a full range of subjects. Leaders' expectations of what pupils should learn are rising over time. Nonetheless, in previous years, the curriculum did not include everything that pupils needed to know and remember in every subject. Pupils across the school are learning much more now.

There are wide-ranging experiences to help pupils grow and develop. The large range of sports on offer is a highlight for many pupils. Pupils talk eagerly about how curriculum workshops, trips and visitors bring learning to life. Pupils take pride when undertaking leadership responsibilities, such as being 'health and safety busters' and school librarians. There are many clubs to enjoy, such as gardening and archery.

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

Leaders and central trust staff work in unison to ensure that the curriculum is continuously improving. The local academy board works strategically to check that leaders' school-wide decisions are making a positive difference.

Leaders' work to improve the curriculum for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is making a demonstrable difference. Leaders and staff identify pupils' needs accurately as soon as they arrive. This ensures that pupils get the specific support they need. As a result of staff's training, the individual targets teachers set for pupils with SEND are getting much more precise. Increasingly, pupils and families contribute to this process.

Central trust staff set high expectations of subject leaders in this school. This bolsters subject leaders' curriculum thinking and is helping them to become experts. Consequently, staff's subject knowledge and the content and sequencing of the curriculum are building well in many subjects. For example, in history, pupils learn about why events occurred. Pupils make connections about history through time. For example, pupils talk knowledgeably about what life was like before the industrial revolution and the impact it had on peoples' lives.

Some curriculum development work stalled due to COVID-19. Therefore, some subject curriculums are further forwards than others. This means that pupils do not learn the depth of information they need to excel in every subject. Leaders' work to secure further developments to the curriculum is building momentum now.

The mathematics curriculum is ambitious and effective. Pupils like the school's approach to teaching. Most staff check what pupils know and remember precisely and use this information to plan onward teaching sequences. Consequently, pupils learn a lot and most use and apply their mathematical knowledge and skills well.

The reading curriculum is ambitious for the vast majority of pupils. Pupils read a range of high-quality books. Most pupils read well and gain a solid understanding of what they read. Pupils at the early stages of reading get lots of opportunities to practise reading. Some pupils catch up quickly. However, leaders do not pick up when staff model inconsistent approaches to the teaching of phonics. A very small minority of pupils do not receive the precise support they need. This slows pupils' learning down.

Effective pastoral support ensures that pupils' well-being and emotional needs remain a top priority. There is a key focus on becoming a responsible citizen in the local community. Pupils cooperate and communicate with increasing confidence with a wide variety of people in different roles. For example, pupils give back to the community through local projects, such as litter picking at Hengistbury Head.

Leaders consider staff's workload when making decisions. Staff value the support they receive, including staff who are new or relatively new to the profession.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that they keep staff up to date with a wealth of safeguarding training. This deepens staff's understanding of any risks that are particularly pertinent locally. Staff apply their training well. They are quick to identify and support pupils and families who may be at risk or need help. Leaders work with external agencies in a timely manner and escalate concerns when they need to.

Pupils know how to keep safe, including when online. The curriculum teaches them about keeping healthy relationships.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some aspects of the school's work to revamp the wider curriculum stalled due to COVID-19. Therefore, leaders' curriculum thinking is further forwards in some subjects than in others. Where this is less developed, the curriculum does not ensure that pupils gain all the information they need to excel. Leaders need to ensure that staff implement a curriculum that enables pupils to know and remember the depth of knowledge they need to learn well in every subject.
- Leaders have not ensured that all staff use consistent approaches to teach and model phonics. A small minority of pupils in Years 3 and 4 need to catch up. Leaders must ensure that they take swift action to ensure that all staff use the agreed approaches so that all pupils catch up and read consistently well.

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 predecessor school to be good in December 2014.

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

Unique reference number	145428
Local authority	Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole
Inspection number	10227698
Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	490
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Lynda Clarke
Headteacher	Sam Fuller
Website	www.cjsdorset.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The headteacher has been in post since September 2020.
- The school is part of Twynham Learning. This is a multi-academy trust of two secondary schools and four primary schools in the local area of Christchurch.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

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 leaders and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, senior leaders, other staff members and the members of the local academy board. She also met central trust staff, the chief executive officer and the chair of trustees.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of work. The inspector listened to pupils read.

- The inspector also spoke to leaders and staff about the school’s approach to pastoral support and personal, social and health education.
- The inspector considered how well the school protects pupils and keeps them safe.
- The inspector considered responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, along with the additional free-text comments. She also considered responses to the pupil and staff surveys, issued at the time of the inspection.

Inspection team

Julie Carrington, lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

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