

Inspection of Courthill Infant School

Courthill Road, Parkstone, Poole, Dorset BH14 9HL

Inspection dates: 17 and 18 January 2023

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

'This is a wonderful school' and 'warm and nurturing environment for learning' are typical of parents' views and show what it is like to be a pupil at Courthill. The school ethos of 'believe, achieve, shine' is clear to see. Pupils are at the heart of all that the school has to offer. Leaders have high expectations, and as a result, pupils achieve well.

Pupils' behaviour is good. They understand the school values, which include respect, responsibility and resilience. This helps pupils stay physically and mentally healthy. Bullying is rare. Pupils say that if it does happen, adults deal with it swiftly.

Pupils have the chance to lead on a wide range of aspects in school, for example, as eco-warriors and school ambassadors. Many clubs help foster pupils' interests, such as dance and drama.

Staff offer excellent pastoral support and go 'above and beyond' for pupils and their families. This ensures that pupils feel happy and safe in school and are ready to learn.

School leaders are proud of the inclusive and community feel that exists. Parents appreciate all the school has to offer. They comment, 'Courthill School offers a warm, welcoming environment to all pupils and the wider community.'

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

Leaders aspire for all pupils to develop a life-long love of learning and achieve their full potential. They have designed an ambitious curriculum which excites and inspires pupils to learn.

Pupils have a wide range of learning experiences from the moment they start school in Reception Year. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) learn the same curriculum content as their peers. Teachers adapt the work to allow pupils to experience success and achieve well. However, leaders recognise that in some subjects, the knowledge and skills they want pupils to know can be disjointed. This means some pupils, including pupils with SEND, cannot remember the key knowledge taught. As a result, some pupils do not build the depth of knowledge in these subjects. Leaders have plans in place to address this quickly.

Leaders know the importance of getting pupils to read as soon as possible. They expect every pupil to become a fluent reader. Children learn phonics from the start. Staff receive training that gives them the knowledge and skills to teach early reading with confidence. Reading books match the sounds that pupils know. Staff quickly spot pupils who may be at risk of falling behind. They intervene with additional support, which means pupils catch up quickly with their peers. Pupils enjoy story

time. They like how teachers bring the characters alive and the opportunity to join in.

Staff carefully weave pupils' spiritual, moral and social education throughout the curriculum. Pupils learn about other cultures, faiths and backgrounds. Pupils understand the importance of respect and tolerance when discussing religions, life choices and family models different from their own. Leaders work hard to ensure everyone in the school community understands their rights. As a result, pupils feel valued, know that their voice is heard and their views respected. The school has achieved the 'Rights Respecting School' gold award in recognition of this work.

Pupils' personal development is exceptional. Many pupils take advantage of the clubs and additional opportunities made available to them. Attendance is high at these clubs. Leaders help pupils to be positive role models. For example, pupils set up food banks for those less fortunate than they are and visit a local care home for older people. As a result, pupils become active citizens who learn how to contribute positively to society.

Leaders ensure that pupils experience a range of enrichment activities to enhance their personal development. The '25 musts' is a firm favourite. Pupils relish completing these activities, such as exploring the school in the dark and travelling in a classic car at Beaulieu.

The school's 'growth mindset' ethos prepares pupils for future success. For example, they learn how to cope when things are not so easy. Pupils' good behaviour helps learning in classrooms to go ahead without interruption.

Staff love working at Courthill. They appreciate the training leaders provide to develop their knowledge and skills. They welcome the focus leaders place on their mental health and well-being. Leaders are conscious of staff workload and consider ways to help them manage this.

Governors and the trust know the school well. They hold leaders to account for the quality of education and care pupils receive.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have created a strong culture of safeguarding with the mantra, 'it could happen here'. Staff are well trained to notice and report any signs of concern. Leaders respond swiftly to support pupils and families in need of help and do not hesitate to escalate concerns when required. Staff carry out the required checks on the suitability of staff to work with pupils. Leaders provide a curriculum that teaches pupils to understand age-appropriate risks, including healthy relationships. Pupils know that adults will listen to them if they have any concerns.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, learning is not designed well enough to enable pupils to gain the depth and fluency of knowledge they need. This means that some pupils, including pupils with SEND, cannot remember the key knowledge taught across the curriculum. Leaders must ensure that all components are consistently in place so that the knowledge that pupils need is connected.

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.

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	142972
Local authority	Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole
Inspection number	10227510
Type of school	Infant
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	346
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Louise Ellis
Headteacher	Alison Carter
Website	www.courthillinfants.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	25 April 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Coastal Learning Partnership, a multi-academy trust.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

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

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, other school staff and four members of the governing body.
- The lead inspector held telephone conversations with the chief executive officer of the trust and the chair of trustees.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, geography and physical education. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The lead inspector listened to pupils in Years 1 and 2 read to an adult. Story time was visited in Reception Year and Year 1.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's safeguarding documentation, including the safeguarding checks carried out on staff working at the school. They considered how well the designated safeguarding lead acts on concerns about pupils' welfare and safety. Inspectors talked to pupils, staff, governors and the chair of trustees about how the school keeps everyone safe.
- The lead inspector considered key documentation, including school improvement plans and governors' minutes.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site. An inspector met with leaders to discuss and scrutinise how they respond to behaviour incidents and pupils' attendance.
- An inspector spoke to pupils who attend the 'Lighthouse club', an early morning breakfast club.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text replies and correspondence received from parents via email. Inspectors spoke with parents at the beginning of the school day. They also considered responses to the staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Jen Southall, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Laura Bennett	Ofsted Inspector
Adam Matthews	Ofsted Inspector

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