

Inspection of Dunalley Primary School

West Drive, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire GL50 4LB

Inspection dates: 17 and 18 January 2023

Overall effectiveness

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are valued and differences are celebrated at Dunalley. Pupils are happy and safe at school. They say there are always adults they can talk to if they have any worries. Parents feel that 'Dunalley is a special place' because each pupil is cared for. Staff understand pupils well.

Leaders are ambitious and make sure staff have high expectations of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The curriculum is well designed because leaders have thought in detail about what pupils should learn. Teachers think carefully about the learning activities they give to pupils. As a result, pupils learn the curriculum well.

Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They are motivated to learn. Bullying is rare, but if it happens, pupils say it is dealt with quickly. Staff make sure pupils understand the impact of their words and actions on others. Pupils know how to be supportive and kind to one another.

Pupils are positive about the wide range of clubs offered to them. Leaders make sure that all pupils have the opportunity to attend activities that develop their interests and talents.

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

Leaders prioritise pupils learning to read successfully. Staff teach the phonics programme consistently well. Pupils practise the sounds that they are learning in the books they read. Leaders regularly check the sounds pupils know. However, they do not always make sure that children catch up quickly enough if they fall behind.

The curriculum is skilfully led and is developing appropriately. Leaders clearly identify and sequence logically the knowledge and vocabulary they want pupils to remember. This means pupils build knowledge well as they move through the school.

In many subjects, the curriculum is well established. Teachers are knowledgeable, for example in mathematics and science. Teaching helps pupils to recollect the knowledge they have learned before, and to connect it effectively to the knowledge they will learn next. In most subjects, this supports pupils to remember the curriculum. In a few subjects, the curriculum is new and teachers know it less well. Where this is the case, pupils are not able to remember what has gone before, such as chronology in history.

Teachers take careful account of what pupils, know, can do and understand, to decide what pupils need to practise in lessons in all subjects, including the foundation subjects. They also use this information to refine the curriculum.

The early years prepares children well for the next stage of learning. The curriculum matches the needs of children. Learning activities enable children to become confident, curious and independent. Staff use the indoor and outdoor learning environment well to help children develop their skills and knowledge.

Support for pupils with SEND is strong. Teachers know the needs of these pupils well. Adaptations in lessons are helping them to learn and become more independent. Personalised support to succeed is also provided in line with pupils' specific needs. Leaders have identified that planning for some pupils' individual needs should be more sharply focused. They are working to improve this with training.

Pupils are calm and orderly when moving around the school. This begins in the early years, when children learn to settle into routines quickly. Most pupils focus well on their learning. If attention drifts, staff are quick to help pupils to get on with their work. The recent addition of outdoor learning at playtime is used to help pupils play well together. Staff teach them how to develop their resilience and cooperation.

Pupils understand the importance of tolerance, respect and democracy from lessons and assemblies. This begins as soon as children join the nursery. Pupils say that in the early years, 'We start to learn to respect others and know we're not all the same.' Pupils learn about a range of personal development, such as health and nutrition, the importance of mental wellness, and healthy relationships.

Senior leaders and governors check the effectiveness of the quality of education. This enables them to match training to the needs of staff. Leaders do not always gather information effectively, for example, to analyse patterns of behaviour so they can spot trends. Leaders are reflective about the timeliness of communication to parents and are taking appropriate action to ensure parents have information when they need it.

Staff appreciate the support of leaders to manage their workload, and they are proud to work at Dunalley School.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a culture of keeping children safe at Dunalley. Leaders and governors carry out their safeguarding responsibilities with diligence. They make sure that appropriate checks are in place for staff and adults before they come into the school to work with children. They review the safeguarding processes of the school regularly.

Leaders make sure that the staff and adults in the school are well trained, so that they can identify pupils who may need help or protection. Leaders make sure pupils get the help they need, and work with other agencies to achieve this.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- For a minority of pupils who are not keeping pace with the school's phonics programme, teachers do not provide targeted support swiftly enough. Consequently, these pupils do not catch up quickly. Leaders should ensure that these pupils have the support they need to read with fluency.
- Leaders do not always analyse some information effectively. This means leaders' actions are not specifically targeted in the most appropriate areas. Leaders should use information more effectively to inform their improvement work.
- In some subjects, the curriculum is in its infancy. As a result, the content and pedagogy are new to some teachers. This means that pupils' knowledge is not as secure as other curriculum areas. Leaders should ensure that staff subject knowledge is secured in these areas, so that pupils learn effectively.

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

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| Unique reference number | 115582 |
| Local authority | Gloucestershire |
| Inspection number | 10256684 |
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community maintained |
| Age range of pupils | 2 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 417 |
| Appropriate authority | Gloucestershire County Council |
| Chair of governing body | Angela Pilling |
| Headteacher | Alison Godfrey |
| Website | www.dunalley.gloucs.sch.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 20 June 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- The school is larger than average. Since the previous full inspection, the school has doubled in size from a one- to two-form entry.
- The number of pupils with SEND is well above average.
- The number of pupils with English as an additional language is above average.
- The school has a nursery that accommodates two- to four-year-olds.
- The school does not use alternative providers.

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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 held discussions with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, other staff, governors, pupils, parents, and a school improvement partner from the local authority.
- The lead inspector met with the special educational needs coordinator to consider the quality of education for pupils with SEND.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, history, computing and science. For each deep dive, 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.
- Inspectors also spoke to leaders about assessment in other subjects, and the curriculum for personal, social, health and economic education.
- The lead inspector listened to pupils in Years 1, 2, and 3 read to an adult.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's safeguarding documentation, including safeguarding checks carried out on staff working at the school. Inspectors talked to pupils, staff and governors about how the school keeps everyone safe.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site. The lead inspector met with the headteacher to discuss and scrutinise how leaders respond to behaviour incidents.
- Inspectors considered responses to the staff and pupil surveys and the parent online survey, Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

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|-----------------------------|------------------|
| Jen Edwards, lead inspector | Ofsted Inspector |
| Marcia Northeast | Ofsted Inspector |
| Andrew Evans | Ofsted Inspector |

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