

Inspection of a good school: Dorchester Primary School

Dorchester Road, Worcester Park, Surrey KT4 8PG

Inspection dates:

7 and 8 February 2023

Outcome

Dorchester Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils like coming to school. They are happy, safe and speak excitedly about the wide range of activities they can participate in. Staff expect all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), to achieve well. Pupils rise to these expectations. They engage well with different challenges designed to enhance their learning, such as the 'bookmark challenge' and the 'times table badges'.

All staff expect pupils to behave well. Most pupils meet this expectation. Pupils understand what bullying is. They comment that it does not happen often but, if it did occur, they would tell an adult. Adults resolve any issues quickly. Pupils trust adults in school to help them. They would share any concerns with their teachers. This is because they have been taught that 'no worry is too small'.

Parents and carers are positive about the school. They typically commented on how their children thrive in the caring and inclusive environment that leaders have created. They also commented on the positive working relationships that their children have with their teachers.

Leaders want every pupil to hold a position of responsibility in their school and have their voice heard. For example, pupils on the school council have helped to make important decisions, such as the names of the school's houses.

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

Leaders have put in place a broad curriculum in line with the ambition of what is expected nationally. In most subjects, the important ideas that pupils need to learn have been identified. The curriculum is then sequenced so that pupils revisit and embed their understanding of these key ideas. For example, in history, pupils learn about the

importance of leadership and economy. They develop their understanding of these ideas through comparing the different reasons that motivated the Romans and Vikings to invade Britain. Similarly, in mathematics, pupils learn important number facts and practise recalling these regularly. With these facts secure in their knowledge, pupils can tackle multi-step mathematical problems confidently.

Pupils typically remember what they have learned. They start to make their own connections between what they already know and what they are being taught. However, some teaching does not support pupils to understand the significance of what they learn and how this fits with what comes next in the curriculum. This is because, in some subjects, leaders have not ensured that sufficient clarity over the essential knowledge that pupils should learn is embedded.

Leaders prioritise reading. The current phonics programme was introduced in September 2021. Children in the early years learn the sounds that letters make from the very start of the Reception Year. Leaders make sure that the books pupils read match the sounds they have learned. Staff typically use teaching strategies and resources of the phonics programme as intended. As a result, most pupils quickly learn to read fluently. However, a small number of staff are not confident in using the chosen strategies consistently well. This means that, on occasion, teaching is not supporting pupils' reading development as effectively as it could be.

Teachers present learning clearly. They check what pupils know and address any misconceptions they may have. This ensures that errors do not persist in pupils' understanding over time. Teachers provide the support that all pupils, including those with SEND, need to access the planned curriculum. For example, in mathematics, pupils have access to different resources and pictorial representations when tackling new ideas. Once they have secured their understanding, these resources are gradually withdrawn. Teaching encourages pupils to demonstrate and apply their learning independently and in different contexts.

In the early years, children are well supported to develop their vocabulary in different subjects. For example, in mathematics, children in Nursery are encouraged to use words like 'taller' when considering if they can reach the ceiling. Similarly, in Reception, children learn and practise the concept of 'one more' and 'one less' through their interactions with adults and planned activities.

This is a highly inclusive school where pupils are articulate and polite. They are supported to discuss sensitive topics with maturity. Leaders are proactive in developing pupils' understanding of and respect for the different protected characteristics. Pupils learn about all difference. For example, the curriculum has been shaped so that pupils learn about and are encouraged to challenge common stereotypes. Pupils are also taught about how to stay safe, including online. For example, they learn about the dangers of digital footprints. Pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain. Leaders provide a wide range of after-school clubs, including for several sports, creative activities and coding skills.

Leaders prioritise the well-being of everyone. Staff, including those at the beginning of their careers, are overwhelmingly positive about the support that leaders provide for their workload. They comment that leaders listen to any issues and provide solutions.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders train all staff to know how to help keep pupils safe. This means that they understand what signs pupils may display if they are at risk of harm. Records show that any concerns are followed up thoroughly. Leaders work with a wide range of external agencies to secure the most appropriate help for pupils.

Pupils learn and remember important messages on how to stay safe. They know about hidden dangers on the internet and what to do if they are concerned.

Leaders manage safer recruitment effectively.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- A small number of staff are not using the school's chosen phonics resources and strategies with confidence. This impacts on how quickly some pupils catch up with their reading. Leaders should ensure these staff receive additional training and support so that pupils are consistently supported to learn to read fluently.
- In a small number of foundation subjects, the curriculum does not clarify the most important knowledge and skills that pupils should develop over time. As a result, teachers do not routinely focus on these important ideas. Leaders should ensure that essential concepts are clearly defined and sequenced in these subjects and that pupils are supported to understand the significance of what they learn and how this fits into their subsequent learning.

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 an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually, this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good on 31 October and 1 November 2017.

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	102982
Local authority	Sutton
Inspection number	10255506
Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	579
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Co-Chairs of governing body	Jane Templeman and Janet Carroll
Headteacher	Cathy Bell
Website	www.dorchesterprimary.com
Date of previous inspection	31 October and 1 November 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The current headteacher took up post in January 2021.
- Dorchester Primary School is part of Sutton Education Trust, a cooperative trust comprising six other schools within the London Borough of Sutton.
- Leaders make use of one registered alternative provider.

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 their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher and other members of the senior leadership team. She also met with representatives from the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject

leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- The inspector also considered the curriculum in other subjects.
- To evaluate safeguarding, the inspector checked the single central record of pre-employment checks and met with the designated safeguarding leader. She reviewed documentation related to safeguarding, including records of concerns.
- The inspector held meetings with groups of pupils to discuss their views.
- The inspector considered the views of parents through Ofsted's online survey, Parent View.

Inspection team

Alison Colenso, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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