

Inspection of a good school: The Epiphany School

Shillingstone Drive, Muscliff, Bournemouth, Dorset BH9 3PE

Inspection dates: 15 and 16 November 2023

Outcome

The Epiphany School continues to be a good school.

The headteacher of this school is Vanessa Webster. This school is part of The Epiphany School Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Claire Wheeler.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at The Epiphany School get off to a great start to their education. They flourish because staff expect the absolute best of them. Pupils rise to these high expectations. They achieve well in many areas of the curriculum.

The school's values of 'love, courage and respect' are brought alive in all areas of school life. For example, pupils show love by raising money for charities and singing to older residents in the community. They know the importance of good manners. Pupils hold doors open for others, greet visitors with a smile and say please and thank you. Attendance is high as pupils want to go to school.

The school is a harmonious place to learn. Staff expect pupils to behave well, and they do. Pupils show commitment to their learning. They listen attentively, take turns and cooperate with their classmates. Staff show genuine care and compassion towards pupils. They create a safe place to learn. This gives pupils the confidence to share any worries with adults.

Older pupils are proud advocates for the school. They develop leadership skills and responsibilities as reading buddies, team captains, sports ambassadors and library monitors. They act as superb role models for younger pupils.

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

The school sees reading as the gateway to pupils' learning. It is an absolute priority. Staff have thoughtfully chosen books to develop pupils' vocabulary and an appreciation of the world around them. For example, pupils in Year 6 build empathy through the books they

study about the Second World War. Pupils love spending time in the inviting library. They like to borrow books and revel in discussing their favourite authors. By the time pupils leave the school, they are avid readers.

As soon as children start in Reception Year, staff immerse them in a range of songs, stories and poems. The phonics programme has had a marked impact on pupils' reading ability. Staff have expert knowledge. They use assessment sharply to notice pupils who need extra help. Pupils who struggle receive additional 'keep-up' lessons. No pupil is left behind when learning to read.

The drive for excellence is why the school has upgraded the curriculum subject by subject. It carefully plans the key concepts and vocabulary pupils learn from Reception Year to Year 6. In established subjects, pupils learn more and acquire a deep understanding of complex concepts. For example, pupils in Year 4 spoke confidently about hierarchy when discussing culture in Ancient Egypt. Similarly, in Year 6, pupils use historical sources to analyse life as an evacuee. However, the school recognises that its work is at an earlier stage in some subjects, including mathematics. As a result, pupils do not have the same depth of knowledge in these subjects as they do in others.

Teachers assess pupils' understanding regularly. They revisit important content to check what pupils know and can do. Teachers use quizzes and stories to ensure that important knowledge sticks.

The school carefully monitor how well pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are doing. Staff adapt their teaching and support so that pupils experience success. As a result, pupils work hard in lessons and produce work of a high standard. Pupils who visit the 'Phoenix Room' benefit from effective pastoral guidance to help them with their emotional well-being.

Pupils' positive conduct across the school results in learning that is free from disruption. Routines for effective behaviour begin in the early years and continue throughout the school. Staff motivate pupils to earn stars and team points for doing the right thing.

Pupils extend their learning beyond the classroom. They have many opportunities to take part in sporting, cultural and social events. For example, learning about water safety reinforces staying safe in the community. Celebrating religious festivals and different family types develops a sense of belonging. School trips to places of interest, such as museums and local landmarks, complement pupils' learning. Pupils play their part in making sure that this is a school where everyone is welcome and accepted.

The headteacher leads the school with integrity and compassion. A strong spirit of teamwork exists. Senior leaders and governors work together to nurture and cultivate the talents of all pupils. The school invests in purposeful training and coaching to give staff the guidance they need to teach the new curriculum effectively.

Parents are overwhelmingly complimentary about the school's work. Many commented on the positive community spirit and how the school gives their children everything they need to thrive.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some curriculum subjects, the key concepts and vocabulary that pupils need to learn are not as clearly set out as the more developed subjects. Consequently, pupils do not have the same depth of knowledge in these subjects as in others. The school should ensure that it defines the key concepts and vocabulary so that pupils build on their learning and have the same depth of knowledge as they do in other subjects.

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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in February 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.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years,

looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

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| Unique reference number | 138040 |
| Local authority | Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole |
| Inspection number | 10288186 |
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Academy converter |
| Age range of pupils | 4 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 423 |
| Appropriate authority | Board of trustees |
| Chair of trust | Claire Wheeler |
| Headteacher | Vanessa Webster |
| Website | www.epiphany.bournemouth.sch.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 18 January 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- The school is part of The Epiphany School Academy Trust, a single-academy trust.
- There have been many changes to staffing since the previous inspection. The headteacher and deputy headteacher took up post in September 2021.
- The school is part of the Diocese of Portsmouth and Winchester. The school received a section 48 inspection for schools of a religious character in September 2023.
- The school currently uses two unregistered alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector held discussions with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the assistant headteachers and other school staff. The inspector also met with 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 some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- The inspector listened to pupils in Years 1, 2 and 3 read to an adult.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site. He spoke with pupils and staff about behaviour.
- The inspector spoke with a range of staff to discuss how leaders support their workload and well-being.
- The inspector spoke to parents at the start of the school day.
- The inspector considered responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments, and responses to the staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Dale Burr, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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