

# Inspection of Corfe Castle Church of England Primary School

East Street, Corfe Castle, Wareham, Dorset BH20 5EE

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Inspection dates: 7 and 8 November 2023

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

The headteacher of this school is Amy Howe. This school is part of Coastal Learning Partnership, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Paul Howieson, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Louise Ellis.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils love coming to this warm and welcoming school. The values of courage, community, perseverance and belief embody the work of the school. Staff have high expectations of all pupils. Pupils rise to these expectations.

Pupils benefit from an enriching experience at Corfe Castle Primary School. The school sits at the heart of the local community. Pupils animatedly discuss the many opportunities provided to them beyond the academic. For example, the school held a traditional sports day in the grounds of Corfe Castle. Pupils participated in events such as a hill scramble, archery and a tug of war. The school provides a warm space on a Sunday to serve soup to members of the local community. Because of this, pupils develop an understanding of citizenship. Pupils remember those who fought in the Second World War by laying crosses at the local church. Trips are thoughtfully linked to the school's curriculum. For example, pupils visited Swanage Pier to learn about animal adaptation.

The school has worked tirelessly to engage with parents and carers since the previous inspection. The community speaks highly of the many changes that have taken place. Consequently, parents have confidence in the school, and pupils enjoy attending.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance have had an unwavering focus on the curriculum. Together, they have taken time to consider the local context as part of curriculum design. The school has identified the small steps of precise knowledge it wants pupils to learn from early years to Year 6. This is sequenced carefully towards ambitious 'big questions' in all subjects. Teachers say that this precision has helped them with their workload. Training from the trust and external advisers has helped staff sharpen their practice. Staff are appreciative of this investment in their skills. They have sound subject knowledge to be able to teach the curriculum effectively. As a result, pupils progress well through the curriculum.

Early reading has been prioritised. The school has trained all staff to be able to teach phonics expertly. Staff use assessment to identify any areas with which pupils need extra help. Staff match books to the sounds pupils have learned. This helps pupils to gain confidence and enjoyment in reading. Pupils enjoy the 'golden ticket' books they receive as prizes if they read regularly.

Pupils learn to write as part of the school's phonics scheme. In many cases, staff carefully guide pupils to show them how to form letters accurately. However, on occasion, the handwriting policy is not consistently followed and modelled. This means that pupils do not always form letters accurately or use the correct pencil grip. This leads to variability in pupils' work.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are identified early. These pupils have learning support plans that are precise. These provide staff with the information they need to support pupils with SEND well.

Teachers help pupils to think deeply by questioning them well. In mathematics, children in early years learn to understand numbers and count confidently. They quickly identify numbers of objects. Regular recaps help pupils to remember their learning. In art, staff assess whether pupils have met the intended learning for the lesson. From this, it is clear whether pupils need further support in their learning. However, assessment is at an earlier stage in some wider curriculum subjects. The school does not have the same oversight of how well pupils are learning the curriculum in a minority of subjects.

Children in early years make a strong start. Expectations are clear, including how the environment needs to look when it is tidy. This clarity extends further up the school. Pupils engage well in lessons. They are complimentary about the recently updated behaviour policy, saying that they have time to reflect on their actions. Pupils learn to be responsible through roles such as being part of the 'praise group'. Leaders monitor and address any attendance concerns, including persistent absenteeism. This has reduced significantly in recent years. Leaders are creative in their approach to supporting every child to attend school. For example, there is a 'wake and shake' breakfast club.

The school provides pupils with lots of activities outside their normal lessons. Leaders listen carefully to what pupils say about these activities. They make changes to the clubs offered as a result. For example, they have introduced sewing, outdoor survival skills and gardening clubs. Pupils learn about online and physical risks, including water safety. This allows pupils to be ready for the wider world.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- At times, inaccurate pencil control and letter formation go unaddressed. This means that some pupils do not produce fluent handwriting with correct letter formation in line with the school's approach to the teaching of handwriting. The trust must ensure that expectations of writing are well understood by staff and must enable pupils to have regular opportunities to practise writing.
- In some wider curriculum subjects, approaches to assessment are still being developed. In these subjects, the school does not have oversight of how well pupils are learning the curriculum. The trust should ensure that assessment across all subjects is effective in identifying how well pupils are building their knowledge.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	142145
<b>Local authority</b>	Dorset
<b>Inspection number</b>	10288206
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	68
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Louise Ellis
<b>CEO of the trust</b>	Paul Howieson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Amy Howe
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.corfecastle.dorset.sch.uk">www.corfecastle.dorset.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	11 and 12 February 2020, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- There has been a change in headteacher since the previous inspection. The headteacher was appointed in April 2022.
- At the time of the previous inspection, the school was part of Saturn Education Trust. Since then, Saturn Education Trust has merged with two other local multi-academy trusts. The school joined Coastal Learning Partnership, a multi-academy trust, in March 2020.
- The school is designated as having a religious character. The school is in the Diocese of Salisbury. The most recent section 48 inspection of the school was carried out in September 2023.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- There is a before-school club for pupils who attend the school.

## Information about this inspection

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

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, school staff, parents, pupils and representatives from the trust, including the chair of the trust and the chief executive officer.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and physical education. 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.
- The lead inspector listened to pupils from Years 1, 2 and 3 reading to a known adult.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: 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.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school, including at lunchtime and breaktimes. In addition, the inspectors met with pupils formally and informally to hear their views.
- Inspectors considered responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments. They also looked at responses to the pupil survey and responses to the staff survey.

## Inspection team

Lakmini Harkus, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Adam Matthews

Ofsted Inspector

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