

Inspection of a good school: Puddletown Church of England First School

Dorchester Road, Puddletown, Dorchester, Dorset DT2 8FZ

Inspection date:

29 November 2023

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

The head of this school is Anna Seal. This school is part of Wessex Multi-Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Mike Foley, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Martin Baker.

What is it like to attend this school?

There is a strong sense of community at Puddletown First School.

The school has begun to improve the quality of the curriculum. Improvements are being made to the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Nevertheless, improvements to the quality of education, including the provision for pupils with SEND, are in their infancy.

Pupils are polite and well mannered. They particularly enjoy playtimes and the outside areas, including the go-karts for key stage 2 pupils. Pupils appreciate a range of leadership opportunities, such as the school council, eco-warriors and Year 4 ambassadors. Older pupils are 'learning buddies' for the youngest children. This helps them to learn about responsibility and being positive role models.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, including in school, in the community and online. Most pupils say they feel safe. They know that there are adults in school who will help them if they have any worries. Pupils appreciate how kind and helpful staff are. Parents agree. Parents who responded to Ofsted's Parent View survey said that their children are happy and safe at the school.

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

The school has prioritised developments in early reading, mathematics and the early years. In these areas, the curriculum is well sequenced and progressive. This is reflected in the most recent outcomes in statutory assessments. In subjects where staff training has been a priority, for example in mathematics and phonics, most pupils are well supported.

The school has put in place a new phonics scheme. It identifies the small steps in learning that pupils need to take in learning to read. Children learn to read as soon as they start Reception Year. Pupils who fall behind in phonics receive the support they need to catch up. Most pupils read books that match the sounds they know. However, some younger pupils do not practise the sounds they have learned to become confident before moving on. As a result, their understanding of the phonics code is less secure. Pupils enjoy listening to stories. This starts in the early years, where children learn nursery rhymes, stories and songs.

Curriculums in many subjects are still in the early stages of development. They do not identify the precise knowledge and skills that pupils need to learn and remember in all subjects. As a result, some pupils do not develop a secure understanding of essential knowledge.

Assessment is being developed. The school does not yet check what pupils know and remember in all subjects. This means that teaching does not always address where there are misconceptions or gaps in learning. The curriculum is not adapted to ensure that pupils build on what they already know.

The school is updating its provision for pupils with SEND. Staff know pupils well. They put appropriate support plans in place. However, learning is not always adapted to ensure that pupils with SEND learn well across the curriculum. Some pupils with SEND do not access the same learning as their peers. For example, in mathematics, pupils with SEND do not always extend their fluency skills into problem-solving and reasoning.

Pupils' behaviour is generally positive. In the early years, children understand the routines and expectations. They learn to take turns and to play collaboratively. The school environment is calm and purposeful. Most pupils listen well to adults and their peers. However, not all staff have high expectations of how pupils should behave. At times, incidents of low-level behaviour are not addressed, and this impacts on the learning of pupils.

The school values of acceptance, forgiveness, responsibility and justice underpin its ethos. Pupils recognise that the values help them to learn how to treat one another. They learn about equality and understand that it is important to treat everyone the same. Pupils learn the importance of being respectful to others and themselves.

Pupils enjoy a range of extra-curricular clubs, such as art club and volleyball club, in which they can develop their talents and interests. They learn about citizenship through, for

example, taking part in local environmental projects and through fundraising opportunities.

Staff enjoy working at the school. Teachers, including those at the early stages of their careers, appreciate the support they receive for their workload and well-being. The school is well supported by the trust. It understands the school's priorities for improvements.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The trust has not defined the precise knowledge it wants pupils to know and remember in all areas of the curriculum. Staff do not always have the training they need to deliver the curriculum consistently. Consequently, pupils do not develop a secure understanding. The trust needs to review and refine the curriculum so that pupils build the knowledge they need across all subjects and are fully prepared for the next stage in their education.
- Assessment is not used well. Checks are not routinely made on what pupils know and remember. Systems for assessment and for pupils to revisit and recall prior learning are being developed. However, gaps in pupils' knowledge are not identified in all subjects. The trust needs to ensure that checks are made on what pupils learn and remember, to inform future learning, so that pupils know more and remember more over time.
- Recent updates in the provision for pupils with SEND are in the early stages of development. Consequently, support for some pupils with SEND does not always meet their needs and enable them to learn the curriculum well. The trust needs to ensure that staff are trained well to support pupils with SEND so that pupils follow the curriculum successfully.

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 predecessor school, Puddletown Church of England First School, to be good in February 2011.

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

Unique reference number	141806
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	10298035
Type of school	First
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	138
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Martin Baker
CEO of the trust	Mike Foley
Headteacher	Anna Seal
Website	www.puddletownfirst.dorset.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	23 March 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Puddletown Church of England First School is part of the Wessex Multi-Academy Trust.
- The head of this school has been in post since September 2023.
- The school uses one registered alternative provision.
- The school is part of the Diocese of Salisbury.
- The school had its last section 48 inspection in November 2022, where it was judged to be good overall.

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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher and the chief executive officer. They held meetings with a trustee, members of the local governing board, and a representative from the diocese.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, the inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspectors also reviewed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- 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 considered the responses to Ofsted's Parent View online survey. They also spoke with parents at the start of the school day. Inspectors considered the responses to the staff survey.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site. Additionally, the inspectors spoke to pupils to discuss their views about the school.

Inspection team

Nicky McMahon, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Debbie Tregellas

Ofsted Inspector

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