

Inspection of Powerstock Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

School Hill, Powerstock, Bridport, Dorset DT6 3TB

Inspection dates: 6 and 7 February 2024

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

The new headteacher and governors have prioritised curriculum development. They are ambitious and want the best for pupils. Recent steps have been made to improve the curriculum. However, it is still early days and the current curriculum does not yet match their ambition. As a result, too many pupils progress through the school without securing the essential knowledge they need to know.

Parents are supportive of the school. They appreciate the way the school focuses on developing the whole child. This means pupils develop positive relationships with staff. As a result, pupils are happy and say they feel safe in school. Pupils have a trusted adult to speak to if they have any concerns.

Pupils appreciate opportunities to develop their skills beyond the academic, such as learning to play an instrument or to rock climb. These activities help pupils to build self-confidence.

Pupils have a strong understanding of fundamental British values. They learn about democracy by voting for peers to represent them in the school council. Regular assemblies provide an opportunity for pupils to learn about beliefs and spirituality. Pupils understand the importance of keeping healthy, both in body and in mind.

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

The school is beginning to develop the quality of education so that it better reflects leaders' vision for the school.

Pupils learn to read as soon as they begin school. However, the curriculum for early reading and phonics lacks rigour and does not match the needs of younger pupils. The books that younger pupils read do not always match the sounds they know. As a result, pupils develop gaps in their phonics knowledge. The teaching of phonics does not always help pupils to catch up quickly.

Older pupils talk passionately about the books they have read. Pupils read a range of books that include characters with very different backgrounds and characteristics. As a result, pupils talk with confidence about the importance of equality and diversity.

In some subjects, such as mathematics, the school's curriculum is carefully sequenced. However, in other subjects, the important knowledge that the school wants pupils to know and remember has not been fully identified. As a result, pupils, including those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), do not secure the essential knowledge they need to know. School leaders are aware of this and have started to put plans in place to address this. In addition, assessment is not used effectively to check what pupils know and understand. This means teaching does not always adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of the pupils. As a

result, some pupils develop gaps in their knowledge while for others learning is not complex enough.

Pupils with SEND are identified early. They learn the same curriculum as their peers. The school builds close relationships with families to gain an understanding of pupils' needs. However, as there are weaknesses in the curriculum and assessment is not well used, pupils with SEND do not learn effectively.

Pupils know what it means to be a good friend. They play together well. Children in the early years are calm and keen to learn. They learn the importance of protecting the environment. They have hands-on experiences and take part in local community tree-planting projects.

Older pupils enjoy learning outdoors. Pupils build dens, light fires, forage for wild garlic and use the wild environment to make abstract art. As a result, pupils develop resilience and teamwork along with a love of the outdoors.

Governors are committed to the school and the community. They are involved in all aspects of school life. They support the school's vision to improve the quality of education for pupils. Governors also understand the importance of balancing the well-being and workload of staff. Staff feel supported and are proud to work at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum for early reading and phonics does not meet the needs of the pupils. Books are not consistently well matched to pupils' phonics knowledge and the teaching of phonics does not enable pupils to catch up quickly. As a result, too many pupils have gaps in their phonics knowledge. The school must ensure that it implements a well-planned and sequenced phonics curriculum.
- The school's curriculum, in some subjects, is not clearly sequenced or strategically planned, including in the early years. As a result, pupils, including those with SEND, do not build secure knowledge over time. The school needs to be systematic in its approach to developing the curriculum. It needs to ensure that all subjects have a clear progression of knowledge so that pupils know more and remember more.
- Assessment is inconsistent across the curriculum and teaching does not always adapt learning accordingly. As a result, pupils do not remember as much as they could. The school needs to ensure that assessment is used effectively to understand what pupils know and remember over time.

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	113812
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	10297911
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	57
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	David Jones
Headteacher	Nick Harris
Website	www.powerstock.dorset.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	14 and 15 March 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher started his post in January 2024.
- The school is part of the Diocese of Salisbury.
- The school's last section 48 inspection under the Education Act 2005 for schools of religious character was carried out in December 2016.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

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

- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with teachers, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site.
- The inspectors gathered parents' views by considering the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and by talking to parents before and after school. The inspectors also evaluated responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

James Gentile, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Laura Bennett

Ofsted Inspector

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