

Inspection of a good school: The Prince of Wales School

Maiden Castle Road, Dorchester, Dorset DT1 2HH

Inspection dates:

20 and 21 March 2024

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 be outstanding if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at The Prince of Wales School thrive. They are happy, safe and well cared for. Staff have high expectations for all pupils to reach their potential. Pupils rise to these expectations and learn the curriculum exceptionally well. The motto 'Inspired to learn' is a lived experience for all. Pupils enjoy coming to school and love to learn. This is reflected in their high attendance.

The motto 'Choose kindness' runs through the school. Diversity is celebrated, and pupils know that equality is an important part of their school. Pupils are inclusive of each other. They show kindness and respect in all that they do.

The school has put personal development at the heart of the curriculum. There are many enriching opportunities that go beyond the academic. For example, pupils develop their understanding of culture and diversity through the 'Food, Faith and Farming Fortnight'. Pupils know they make a difference to their school through pupil leadership roles, including school council and fruit monitors. There are a range of clubs on offer to develop talents and interests, such as science and art club. Parents are overwhelmingly complimentary of the wider range of experiences available to their children. Many parents share that these opportunities enable every child to shine.

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

The school has designed an ambitious curriculum, starting in the early years. The precise knowledge pupils need to know and remember is identified and sequenced progressively across all subjects. As a result, teachers are clear about the knowledge pupils need to learn to prepare them well for future learning. This helps pupils to build their knowledge securely.

The development of staff subject knowledge is a priority. Training supports the implementation of the curriculum as well as the development of subject leadership. For example, many staff have undertaken specialist training to develop their expertise in the areas they lead. As a result, subject leaders know their subjects well.

Pupils regularly recap what they have learned. This helps them to remember important knowledge over time. For example, pupils play 'Who wants to be a historian?' to revisit prior knowledge and current learning to embed this into their long-term memory. To develop this further, pupils have 'mastermind' cards that identify the precise knowledge they will learn in each unit of study. Pupils play this at home and at school to deepen their understanding.

Staff use assessment to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge. Subsequent learning is adapted to help pupils learn the curriculum well. The school offers a 'rocket club' to provide targeted support to pupils who need extra help to keep up. As a result, pupils are building their knowledge securely across the curriculum.

The school is highly ambitious for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities to do well. Staff think carefully about adaptations to learning to enable these pupils to be successful. Pupils with complex needs are fully integrated into the life of the school. They benefit from bespoke support and adaptations. This enables pupils to make progress securely from their starting points.

Children in early years flourish. They learn a curriculum that supports them to excel. Children show high levels of engagement and interest in the world around them. They develop their communication and language through carefully organised learning activities. For example, children experiment with mixing watercolours to match the colours found in feathers.

Reading is a high priority. A love of reading is promoted by all staff who use a range of creative approaches, such as parents reading books as a 'mystery reader'. The library area is at the heart of the school. There, pupils are immersed in a unique sensory reading experience loved by all. The school is determined for all pupils to learn to read. Staff receive training to teach phonics well. This includes bespoke training to support pupils with complex needs, such as using British Sign Language to support understanding.

Pupils behave well and show highly positive attitudes. Pupils enjoy talking about their learning and show enthusiasm when sharing what they know. Pupils know the expectations and routines in place to help them learn the curriculum well.

Pupils' wider development is exceptional. The school's programme is highly valued by pupils, staff and parents. Across the curriculum, the school ensures that areas of study are enriched through trips, visitors and events. For example, pupils visit Shire Hall Historic Courthouse Museum to enrich their historical knowledge about Tolpuddle Martyrs. The school's bespoke approach to personal development through the 'POW Passport' encourages every pupil to try new experiences. For example, pupils celebrate growing their own food or sleeping under the stars.

Staff and governors are wholeheartedly committed to ensuring that all pupils succeed at this school. Staff greatly appreciate the support in place to fulfil their roles. Governors have an accurate and detailed view of the school. They use this to provide effective support and challenge.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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 in June 2018.

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	113747
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	10307235
Type of school	First
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	2 to 9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	214
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Martin Butcher
Headteacher	Gary Spracklen
Website	www.princeofwales.dorset.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	21 and 22 June 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school operates an eight-place resourced provision for pupils with a physical disability in the local authority. These pupils are fully integrated into the school.
- There is a pre-school provision for children aged two and above.
- The school provides a before- and after-school club.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

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 her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector spoke with school leaders, staff, parents, pupils, governors and a representative from the local authority.

- 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 spoke to leaders and pupils about the curriculum in some other subjects.
- 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 listened to pupils read to a trusted adult.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site. Additionally, the inspector spoke to pupils to discuss their views about the school.
- The inspector considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online survey for parents. The inspector considered comments made by parents online during the inspection and met with some parents at the start of the second day. The inspector also considered responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff. There were no responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

Esther Best

His Majesty's Inspector

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