

Inspection of an outstanding school: Parkstone Grammar School

Sopers Lane, Poole, Dorset BH17 7EP

Inspection dates:

17 and 18 April 2024

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of outstanding 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 headteacher of this school is David Hallsworth. This school is part of Parkstone Grammar School Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is chaired by Dawn Stark.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy and safe. Their behaviour is impeccable. They consistently live up to the school's high expectations of their conduct, in and outside of the classroom. Pupils have warm, respectful relationships with each other, and with staff. As a result, a positive and considerate atmosphere pervades the school.

Pupils make a highly-active contribution to the school and wider community. For example, sixth-form students lead assemblies to mark important historical events, such as the Holocaust. This develops their public speaking skills. Pupils, of all ages, champion important causes, such as environmental care. They collaborate with other schools to think of solutions to the challenges faced by society.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of extra-curricular activities. They make good use of these. Many pupils participate in musical groups and events, such as concerts and music tours abroad. There are lots of different clubs and societies. For example, pupils attend drama, gardening and cyber clubs. Sixth-form students attend the medical society or debating society. Pupils raise money for charities and take on responsibilities which develop their leadership skills, such as in sports and languages.

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

Although the school has high expectations of pupils' achievement, pupils do not always build their knowledge and understanding in sufficient detail. For example, they do not typically write in depth or make connections between different aspects of their learning.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge. In some subjects, such as art, pupils acquire an extensive range of skills. They produce high-quality pieces of work and understand how to draw on their knowledge of different artists. However, some subject curriculums are not clear enough about what pupils should know or be able to do. Therefore, pupils do not consistently demonstrate high-quality work in all subjects.

In some subjects, teaching routinely checks pupils' learning and the quality of their work. Where this is the case, teachers plan carefully for what pupils will learn next. However, in other subjects, teachers' use of assessment does not identify gaps in pupils' learning or correct their misconceptions in a timely way. This hinders pupils' understanding later.

The school identifies the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) well. It has refined its work to ensure that all pupils' needs are thoroughly assessed and understood. Teachers receive information about how to make adaptations for pupils with SEND. They use this to meet the needs of pupils successfully.

Pupils have consistently positive attitudes to learning. They discuss and debate ideas thoughtfully and cooperate with each other. The school encourages sixth-form students to read academic texts beyond their studies. This helps them to widen their knowledge and prepares them well for future academic studies. Younger pupils make good use of the library.

Pupils are punctual and most attend school well. However, some sixth-form students and disadvantaged pupils do not attend school as regularly as their peers. The school identifies pupils who need help to reduce their absence. It provides timely support and helps pupils to make improvements to their attendance.

Pupils know about the different characteristics protected in law, such as gender and disability. They understand the importance of celebrating each other's commonalities and differences. Pupils have many opportunities to learn about representation and democracy. For example, pupils take up roles, such as 'prefects' and 'head of house'. The 'school cabinet' shares pupils' views with school leaders and governors.

Pupils follow an appropriate personal, social and health education programme. They learn how to keep themselves safe when online and about healthy relationships. The school makes adaptations to this programme to address topical issues. For instance, it has raised pupils' awareness and understanding of harmful sexual behaviour. However, the school is still working on identifying precisely what pupils should learn and when.

Pupils, including sixth-form students, receive effective careers, information, education advice and guidance (CIEAG). They have meaningful encounters with a range of employers through careers fairs and mock interviews, for example. Pupils undertake work experience and receive impartial advice about a wide range of future options. The school evaluates its CIEAG programme regularly, further strengthening it where necessary.

Trustees understand their role and fulfil their statutory duties. In most areas of the school's work, they provide useful challenge and support to leaders.

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 subjects, the school has not fully identified the knowledge that pupils should learn and when. As a result, pupils sometimes lack detail in their subject knowledge and skills. The trust and school should ensure that subject curriculums are planned in a way that supports pupils to demonstrate an in-depth understanding in all subjects.
- In some subjects, teachers' use of assessment does not always check what pupils know and remember. Consequently, pupils develop misconceptions or have gaps in their knowledge which are not remedied. This hinders their ability to assimilate future concepts and ideas. The trust and school need to ensure that assessment is used effectively in all subjects.

Background

When we have judged a school to be outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. 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 outstanding in October 2017.

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	136368
Local authority	Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole
Inspection number	10322242
Type of school	Grammar (selective)
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Girls
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,220
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	269
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of governing body	Dawn Stark
Headteacher	David Hallsworth
Website	www.parkstone.poole.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	11 and 12 October 2017

Information about this school

- This is a grammar school for girls. The admissions policy is selective.
- The school shares some sixth-form teaching with another local grammar school.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.
- The school is a single academy trust.
- 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 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 carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, history and art and design. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, looked at curriculum planning, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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 the questionnaire for parents, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments. Inspectors also considered the responses to the online surveys for pupils and staff.

Inspection team

James Oldham, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Kathy Maddocks

Ofsted Inspector

Matthew Collins

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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