

Inspection of Old Sarum Primary School

Pheasant Drive, Old Sarum, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP4 6GH

Inspection dates:	3 and 4 June 2025
The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Requires improvement
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Sarah Barwell. This school is part of Magna Learning Partnership, which means other people the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Ian Tucker, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Mark Allinson.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school is now more stable following a period of turbulence. It has increasingly high expectations of pupils' behaviour and achievements. Now, more pupils meet these expectations. Although pupils describe how behaviour in school has improved sometimes learning and play times are still disrupted.

There have been significant changes to the curriculum. Many of these changes have taken place recently. As a result, there are inconsistencies in how well it is implemented, and pupils' achievement remains variable. The school effectively promotes a love of reading. Pupils are proud of their new library space and enjoy reading with their teachers.

The 'Project 50+', a relatively new initiative, reflects the school's ambition and commitment to ensuring that pupils have a rich range of experiences. This is now a strength of the school. These experiences help pupils develop their talents, interests and knowledge of the wider world. For example, pupils develop an understanding of democracy through voting for head students. They enjoy 'making a difference' weeks and being positive citizens in their community.

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

In most areas, the curriculum is ambitious for all pupils. The school has identified the most important knowledge pupils need to know in Years 1 to 6. There are opportunities for pupils to revisit previous learning. However, much of the curriculum is new and not well-embedded. The way it is taught is not consistently effective. Teachers do not systematically check pupils' understanding or provide clear explanations. This means that some pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), can struggle to keep up. This impacts their focus and behaviour. Pupils are not developing a deep understanding of what they have learned over time.

In the early years, the school has not considered precisely what children need to learn in readiness for key stage 1. Children in Reception enjoy their time in the stimulating learning environment, however sometimes activities lack purpose and adult direction, so they do not learn as well as they should.

Children start to learn phonics as soon as they start Reception. They read books matched to the sounds they know. Pupils who fall behind are supported to catch up. Over time, pupils' achievement at the end of Year 6 has not been high enough. The school has made changes to the reading curriculum, in Years 3 to 6. For example, pupils now read a range of ambitious texts each week, but there are still too many pupils who do not read with age-appropriate fluency and comprehension.

The mathematics curriculum is having a more positive impact on pupils' achievements, which is not reflected in its published outcomes. The school has made significant improvements to way it teaches mathematical fluency.

Older pupils have gaps in their writing knowledge. They struggle to write with accuracy and at length. There is not a sufficiently sharp focus on developing children's writing skills in the early years and key stage 1.

Pupils with SEND have their needs accurately identified. However, the school does not ensure that staff have the information they need about how to support these pupils in the classroom. The trust has supported the school to meet its statutory obligations and there are plans in place to address any weaknesses in provision.

The school has worked successfully to improve attendance. It has built strong relationships with families. This has also helped to reduce the number of suspensions linked to poor behaviour. Pupils and staff understand the behaviour policy. However, this is not applied consistently well, so some pupils continue to disrupt learning. While staff are vigilant in following up on behaviour concerns, the behaviour of some pupils continues to make others feel uncomfortable.

Pupils have a strong understanding of how to keep themselves safe and healthy. The school prioritises mental health effectively. Pupils have a secure understanding of discrimination and the importance of respecting difference. They learn about important local and national events as well as different cultures and religions. This area of the school's work is highly successful.

While there are weaknesses in the school, the trust, local academy committee, and leaders within school are wholly committed to continued improvement. Staff, including early career teachers, are overwhelmingly positive about the changes and support they receive, but it is too early to see the impact of leaders' work across all aspects of 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 implementation of the curriculum is not consistently effective. Staff do not routinely check for understanding and provide opportunities for pupils to deepen their knowledge and understanding. This means that some pupils, including pupils with SEND, do not remember what they have learned. The school must ensure that pedagogical approaches are used consistently effectively, so that pupils retain the most important knowledge and deepen their understanding in different subjects over time.
- The writing curriculum for younger pupils is not sufficiently rigorous. This means that these pupils do not develop secure foundational writing knowledge. As a result, some older pupils are not able to write accurately or at length. The school should ensure

that, starting in the early years, pupils develop strong transcriptional skills so that they write with confidence and at length.

- There is limited strategic oversight of the early years curriculum. While staff know pupils well and provide a range of activities for them, there is a lack of purpose when planning precisely what pupils need in order to reach a 'good level of development'. This means children do not consistently take part in activities specifically matched to their needs. The school must ensure that learning in the early years is purposeful and matched to children's needs, so that they are well-prepared for key stage 1.
- Some pupils do not meet the school's expectations of their behaviour. This can disrupt learning and cause other pupils to feel frustrated when this behaviour continues. The school must ensure that staff apply the behaviour policy consistently and fairly, so that learning is not disrupted and pupils have confidence that poor behaviour will be addressed.

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	149207
Local authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	10378994
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	309
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Mark Allinson
CEO of the trust	Ian Tucker
Headteacher	Sarah Barwell
Website	www.oldsarum.wilts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school opened in September 2022, when it joined Magna Learning Partnership.
- The school uses one unregistered alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024, will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, other senior leaders and a selection of staff during the inspection.
- The lead inspector met with the chair and other members of the local academy committee and the chair and other members of board of trustees.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, geography and science. For each deep dive, 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. Inspectors also looked at pupils' writing.
- Inspectors analysed responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and the free-text comments.
- Inspectors considered the responses of staff and pupils to Ofsted's online surveys.
- 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 spoke with groups of pupils during lessons and social times. They met with staff who oversee the personal development and behaviour of pupils, including reviewing relevant documents related to how behaviour incidents are reported and followed up.

Inspection team

Victoria Griffin, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Hester Millsop

Ofsted Inspector

Jo Randall

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