

Inspection of Stower Provost Community School

Woodville, Stour Provost, Gillingham, Dorset SP8 5LX

Inspection dates: 25 and 26 January 2023

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

Good

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. They ensure that everyone takes a fully part in the life of the school. However, the quality of education pupils receive is not yet good. In some subjects, the curriculum is not designed or delivered effectively. Consequently, pupils have gaps in their wider curriculum knowledge. Not all pupils learn to read as well as they should.

Pupils feel safe. They enjoy coming to school. Pupils value the friendships they make. Staff provide strong pastoral support. Pupils understand why it is good to be different. They know the importance of respect and tolerance.

Pupils are polite. They show positive attitudes to their learning. At times, low-level disruption occurs when learning is not closely matched to need. Pupils say that adults deal with this quickly. They say there is no bullying. Pupils know adults would act on it if it happened.

Parents speak positively about the school. Many praise the school for the care, guidance and support the new headteacher has brought. One parent commented, 'Her love for the job, enthusiasm and her wonderful manner with all the children is infectious.' Parents appreciate being involved in celebrating their child's successes.

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

The new headteacher is ambitious for the achievement of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). She recognises that the quality of education pupils receive needs to improve.

Leaders understand the importance of pupils learning to read. This begins when children start in the Reception Year. Staff teach phonics effectively in the early years. They introduce children to a range of stories, rhymes and songs. Staff develop children's communication skills well. Books match the sounds pupils know. However, phonics teaching and support for those who need to catch up in key stage 1 is not as effective. As a result, a large majority of pupils have significant gaps in their phonics knowledge. Some staff do not have the necessary expertise to ensure that pupils catch up quickly.

Older pupils enjoy reading. They say reading 'relaxes' them. Teachers provide pupils in key stage 2 with opportunities to deepen their knowledge of reading. Teachers know reading is important to enable pupils to learn the rest of the curriculum.

Leaders have designed the mathematics curriculum from the early years to build pupils' knowledge securely over time. Pupils like mathematics. They talk confidently about their learning. In early years, staff use correct mathematical language to support children's understanding of number. The early years environment, both

inside and out, provides children with a wide range of opportunities to extend their learning.

Leaders have organised subjects across the wider curriculum to take account of mixed-age classes. However, not all subject leaders identify clearly the important knowledge that pupils should learn and the order in which they should learn it. Leaders do not check whether the curriculum is effective. For example, in geography, pupils could not recall what they had learned in the subject before. This slows their build-up of knowledge over time. Teachers do not have an accurate picture of what pupils know and can do. As a result, pupils receive a disjointed learning experience.

Staff have developed a caring and inclusive ethos. They know pupils well. Staff adapt learning so that most pupils with SEND receive the same curriculum as their peers. Pupils with more complex needs receive tailored and specialist support.

Overall, pupils form good relationships with each other and behave well. Children in the early years follow routines and instructions sensibly. During social times, pupils play across the age groups well. Adults interact positively with pupils at lunchtime, both in the hall and on the playground.

Leaders provide pupils with opportunities beyond the academic curriculum. This develops their character and resilience. Pupils debate and discuss issues of interest with each other. They have a good understanding of fundamental British values. They gain an understanding of other cultures and religions. Pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities, such as being house captains or members of the school council.

Governors provide leaders with some challenge in relation to aspects of the curriculum. However, they do not have an accurate view of how well pupils learn in subjects across the wider curriculum. As a result, they do not understand which aspects of the quality of education need to improve. Most staff feel well supported by leaders. Many staff take on a number of roles. Leaders are mindful of the workload this involves.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff act in the best interests of keeping pupils safe. They know pupils and their families well. There are clear procedures for reporting concerns about the welfare of pupils. Regular training ensures that staff know how to record concerns. Staff know leaders take their concerns seriously. Leaders engage with external agencies to support vulnerable pupils. They check on the suitability of staff to work with pupils.

The computing and personal, social and health education curriculum helps pupils learn about staying safe, including when on the internet. Pupils know there are adults they can talk to about any concerns they have.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Pupils in key stage 1 have significant gaps in their phonics knowledge. Consequently, pupils do not read as accurately or as fluently as they should. Leaders need to ensure that all staff receive the support and guidance to teach phonics effectively across the school and to help those pupils who have fallen behind to catch up quickly.
- Leaders have not checked the effectiveness of the design and implementation of subjects across the wider curriculum with enough rigour. As a result, in some subjects, pupils receive a disjointed curriculum. Leaders need to ensure that all subjects are designed effectively and curriculum leaders have the knowledge and skills required to evaluate and improve the quality of education in their subject areas.
- Assessment information is not precise enough to check what pupils know and understand. In some subjects, pupils have gaps in subject-specific knowledge. This slows their learning. Leaders need to ensure that teachers check pupils' understanding in all subjects so that all pupils secure the key knowledge they need.
- Governors do not have a sufficient depth of understanding of the quality of education pupils receive. Over time, they have not challenged leaders sufficiently about subjects across the wider curriculum. Governors need to ensure that they gain a clear oversight into the effectiveness of the quality of education and hold leaders rigorously to account.

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](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	113674
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	10256708
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	85
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Vanessa Lucas
Headteacher	Ailsa Boardman-Hirst
Website	www.stowerprovost.dorset.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	20 May 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Stower Provost Community School is a smaller-than-average primary school organised across four classes, most of which are mixed age.
- The current headteacher took up her post in September 2022.
- 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.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator, the designated safeguarding leads, groups of staff, a representative from the local authority and members of the governing body.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited samples of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The lead inspector listened to pupils in Years 1, 2 and 3 read to an adult.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's safeguarding documentation, including safeguarding checks carried out on staff working at the school. They reviewed how well the designated safeguarding leads act on concerns about pupils' welfare. The lead inspector reviewed attendance and behaviour records.
- Inspectors considered the 19 responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including 12 free-text responses, 29 responses to the pupil survey and 16 responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Heather Barraclough, lead inspector
Debbie Tregellas

His Majesty's Inspector
Ofsted Inspector

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