

Inspection of Stower Provost Community School

Woodville Stour Provost, Gillingham, Dorset SP8 5LX

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 June 2025

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Stower Provost School has significantly improved. The school wants every pupil to succeed and has worked hard to strengthen many areas of its work. The curriculum is more effective, making it easier for pupils to learn. The help and support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have become much more effective. The majority of pupils are now well-prepared for the next stage in their education.

Most pupils behave well in school. They are polite to adults, visitors and each other. Pupils get on well together in class and know who to go to if they need support. Pupils' personal development is strong. Pupils enjoy the wide range of activities and experiences they get, and these prepare them well for later life.

Pupils are well cared for at school. Staff listen to pupils and take their concerns seriously. Bullying is rare and dealt with effectively. Consequently, pupils feel safe and happy at school.

Most parents and carers strongly support the school. They value the care and individual attention their children receive. Parents appreciate the range of opportunities on offer to their children. Many parents identify the family atmosphere in the school as a particular strength.

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

The curriculum is working well. Pupils can remember and recall more of the important information that they learn. This is because staff increasingly focus on the 'sticky knowledge' they want pupils to remember. This is making it easier for the school to identify when pupils have gaps in their knowledge. Increased rigour in the support for pupils with SEND is leading to more effective help and support. The success of this work can be seen in many subjects. For example, pupils can remember information from history and religious education that helps them understand bigger ideas such as equality and monarchy.

The teaching of reading, writing and mathematics has improved. Staff have been trained in new approaches and use their new expertise to provide increasingly effective opportunities to learn. In reading sessions, pupils pay close attention and get good opportunities to practise the sounds that they know and to word build. The school is promoting a love of reading by making sure that all pupils have access to books that they will enjoy. In mathematics, pupils' knowledge is growing, and their basic skills are improving. While the quality of pupils' writing across the school is improving, leaders recognise that there is more to do. Although many pupils write well, some pupils are not able to spell correctly and use grammar and punctuation accurately.

The school has a clear approach to promoting positive attitudes and addressing poor behaviour. Pupils enjoy the rewards and positive feedback they receive for their hard work and good behaviour. The school deals effectively with incidents of bullying. However,

pupils do not understand this approach well. This means that some pupils mistakenly believe that bullying and unkind behaviour do not always have consequences.

A wide range of activities, opportunities and experiences support all areas of pupils' character development and personal growth. The school has thought carefully about how to make it easier for pupils to understand ideas such as resilience, for example by devising characters to represent the personal qualities it wants its pupils to develop. Attending sporting events, visiting farms, joining the school council or becoming a librarian all contribute to the quality of education that pupils receive at the school. This means that pupils' personal development is very effective.

Most children in the early years get a good grounding in the basics of reading, writing and mathematics and are ready for Year 1. The bright and well-organised classroom offers children a range of activities and books that they enjoy. In most areas of learning the school has broken down what children need to learn into manageable chunks. However, this is not the case for all areas. This means that some areas are not sufficiently well broken down to ensure that children learn the skills and knowledge they need to be ready for the next stage.

The school is ambitious and has worked hard to improve the quality of education pupils receive. Staff are committed to the school, feel involved in this work and well supported. Governors are proud of the improvements the school has achieved. Governors are highly supportive of the school. They understand the school's strengths and the areas that need further work. Sometimes, the school tries to improve too many areas at once. Leaders recognise this can slow down the speed of improvement.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some areas of the curriculum are not being implemented consistently well. This is because the school has not identified the chunks of knowledge that pupils need to gain, the 'sticky knowledge' that prepares them for the next stage in their education. This is particularly the case for personal, social and emotional development in the early years and writing in all year groups. The school should ensure that children and pupils gain the secure knowledge that they need to succeed in these areas.
- Some pupils are not fully aware of the school's approach to dealing with bullying. As a result, these pupils are not confident that the school deals with this effectively. The school should ensure that all pupils have confidence in the school's approach to dealing with bullying and unkindness.

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	113674
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	10378890
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	89
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Sam Watridge
Headteacher	Ailsa Boardman-Hirst
Website	www.stowerprovost.dorset.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	11 June 2024, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has a breakfast club and after-school club run by the governing body.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.

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, subject leaders, the special educational needs coordinator, a representative from Dorset local authority and members of the governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. Inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- An inspector listened to pupils read to an adult.
- 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.

Inspection team

Phil Minns, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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