

Inspection of a good school: Ocean Academy Poole

Constitution Hill Road, Parkstone, Poole, Dorset BH14 0PZ

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 May 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.

The principal of this school is Colleen Duggan. This school is part of Aspiration Academies Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Steve Kenning, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by James Pomeroy. There is also an executive principal, Jo Quarrie who is responsible for this school and one other.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school's motto, 'No limits. No barriers', is exactly what pupils experience at Ocean Academy. Pupils achieve exceptionally well. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), and those who are disadvantaged. Results from national tests are significantly above average at key stage 2. This is testament to the impact the school's curriculum has on pupils.

Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to their learning are impressive. They work hard in all subjects. They meet the high expectations teachers have, producing work that is of a consistently high quality across the curriculum.

Pupils have a strong moral code. They understand the rewards and sanctions which they feel staff use fairly. Pupils have a vast range of opportunities to take on leadership roles. These contribute significantly to the daily life of the school. The anti-bullying ambassadors are proud of their roles and rarely have to sort out any fallouts between pupils. This is because pupils feel accepted as they are.

The wider development offer is exceptional. Pupils benefit from a curriculum well beyond the academic. The offer is inclusive. Everyone has plenty of exciting opportunities to expand their interests and talents.

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

The school has designed a curriculum that is broad and ambitious for all pupils. It has identified, in detail, the knowledge pupils need to know. The skilful sequencing of knowledge ensures pupils learn effectively. Pupils recap and consolidate prior learning before moving on to secure new knowledge. Consequently, pupils keep up because gaps in learning do not widen.

There is no ceiling placed on pupils' progression through the curriculum. The school delivers 'deeper thinking' challenges to all pupils. These challenges are ambitious and focus on the application of pupils' knowledge. Pupils are highly motivated by these activities and often use high quality writing to explain their thinking. Where necessary, pupils with SEND have reading and writing barriers removed. This enables them to excel in other areas of the curriculum.

The school is highly analytical in its use of assessment. It uses a range of processes to identify and address trends in pupils' gaps in knowledge. The curriculum is adapted to reflect what pupils know and can do.

Reading is a golden thread through the curriculum. Books are chosen for their literary value and often complement the knowledge in other subjects. Pupils are excited by them. Many choose to continue reading them if there has not been time to finish the full book. Leaders have implemented a successful phonics programme for those pupils at the early stages of reading. On entry to Year 3, assessments ensure pupils have high quality support where needed. Pupils having phonics support gradually move into whole class reading sessions over the year. This means that they build accuracy and fluency in their own carefully matched reading books as well as being immersed in the whole class texts.

Key vocabulary is a significant focus in other subjects. Teachers use a range of strategies to ensure pupils understand subject specific language. For example, in science, teaching begins with a vocabulary flashcard activity. Pupils rise to the challenge of reading the subject-specific words and explaining their meaning. Teachers continually assess pupils' recall. They determine words that are secure or need further practice. As a result, pupils are continually building up their technical vocabulary. They are then confident and competent at using these in their written work.

The trust and school invest in staff well-being and professional development. Leaders manage staff workload in ways that teachers appreciate. For example, teachers have strong subject knowledge. This is because subject leadership works alongside them at the planning and delivery stages to support their knowledge and confidence. Many staff are encouraged to be experts in their field. They share their knowledge within the school and beyond.

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 May 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	141089
Local authority	Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole
Inspection number	10322287
Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	327
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	James Pomeroy
CEO of trust	Steve Kenning
Principal	Jo Quarrie (Executive Principal) Colleen Duggan (Principal)
Website	www.ocean-aspirations.org
Date(s) of previous inspection	22 – 23 May 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has above average numbers of pupils with SEND or who are disadvantaged.
- The principal was appointed in January 2024 and the assistant principals in April 2024.

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 leaders and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, science and languages. 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 held meetings with the principal, executive principal, assistant principals, curriculum leaders, teaching and support staff, trustees, including the chair of the trust board, chair of the regional board and the national director of education and standards.
- 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 an adult.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site. In addition, she met with pupils informally and formally to hear their views.
- The inspector considered responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including free-text responses. She also took into consideration responses to the staff and pupil surveys.
- The inspector examined a range of documentation provided by the school.

Inspection team

Angela Folland, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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