

Poole Grammar School

Gravel Hill, Poole, Dorset BH17 9JU

Inspection dates

23–24 January 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher has successfully changed the culture of the school by asking staff at all levels to reflect on their practice. He has raised teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve from their high starting points. Teachers now look outward and use links with other schools to improve their practice.
- Pupils' progress is above average. It has improved sharply in GCSE mathematics and in GCSE science subjects. Pupils' progress in GCSE English is improving but is not yet at the same high levels.
- Teaching is typically well-planned and challenging. For example, in history and geography, teaching motivates pupils to learn well and so they understand the work in depth. However, a minority of teaching still does not provide enough challenge.
- Teacher's skills have improved as a result of training provided by senior leaders. Teachers use their in-depth subject knowledge to assess to pupils' understanding effectively.
- Disadvantaged pupils' progress has fluctuated in recent years. Senior leaders' actions to improve the progress of disadvantaged pupils have been largely successful. However, the progress of a minority remains too slow.
- Pupils take pride in their appearance and conduct themselves in a sensible manner around school and in lessons. They have good relationships with each other and with staff.
- Pupils' personal development is promoted strongly because it is seen as everyone's responsibility.
- Sixth-form students are well taught and make good progress. They are fully involved in the life of the main school. Students' rate of attendance, although improving, is too low.
- Senior leaders support the headteacher's vision for improvement at the school. They have successfully introduced better systems for monitoring the quality of teaching and for assessing pupils' progress.
- Middle leaders' skills have improved because they have received high-quality training. Consequently, the great majority hold teachers to account effectively for pupils' progress. However, in a few subjects teaching has not improved quickly enough.
- Governors have an accurate understanding of the performance of the school. They use their knowledge to provide senior leaders with robust challenge and effective support.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching and pupils' achievements by:
 - eradicating the minority of teaching which is not challenging enough
 - identifying further actions that extend the recent successful initiatives to promote the progress of disadvantaged pupils.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare by raising the rate of attendance in the sixth form.
- Improve leadership and management by further developing middle leaders' skills so that the rapid improvements in the quality of teaching in most subjects are replicated across the rest.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher has brought about significant change at this high-attaining school while retaining its strengths and traditions. He has successfully focused teachers' attention on the quality of teaching and the progress pupils make. This has raised teachers' expectations of what pupils are capable of. As a result, pupils' progress is rising quickly.
- The headteacher exemplifies a highly professional approach to leadership which combines high aspirations with a strong emphasis on collaboration. Senior leaders closely follow this model and so, when they introduce new initiatives and working practices, staff at all levels feel included and valued.
- As a consequence of better monitoring of teaching, most middle leaders now have an accurate view of the effectiveness of their departments. Therefore, they are able to challenge weak practice and pinpoint any improvements that are necessary. In most departments teaching is improving quickly. However, in a few, development work is not having enough effect.
- The leadership of teaching is effective. Senior leaders have successfully introduced teaching and learning mentors in the last two years to provide expert coaching for teachers. Teachers welcome the training and professional development available to them. They benefit from working with colleagues in other schools, for example through the work of the Sigma Teaching School Alliance.
- Staff morale is high. Teachers are proud to work at the school and are well respected by pupils. Leaders hold teachers to account for their work well through a robust performance management process. Newly qualified teachers receive effective support, as do students taking part in initial teacher training programmes through the Wessex Training Partnership. The school uses the expertise of staff well to offer courses for teachers in the local area who wish to retrain as mathematics specialists.
- The key stage 4 curriculum offers a range of academic courses which meet the needs of pupils well. Well-conceived revisions to the balance of subjects that pupils study at key stage 4 provide pupils more flexibility and time to study their core subjects in depth. The headteacher and governors are passionate about maintaining a broad curriculum which includes practical subjects. For example, in key stage 3, pupils follow a wide range of creative and design technology subjects.
- Pupils are involved in many activities which cause them to think carefully about life in modern Britain. They are respectful of others' views and they demonstrate a good understanding of our democratic process and the rule of law. Help for Year 7 pupils to cope with the transition from primary school is good. Senior leaders have introduced a new personal, social and health education programme in Years 8 to 11. However, they have not yet made a thorough evaluation of this programme and so they do not have a clear understanding of its effectiveness.
- Pupils take part in a very wide range of extra-curricular activities, including an animation club and a young engineers club. They participate in many different sporting, artistic, and cultural events. The school has a strong tradition in art and

music. For example, the senior percussion ensemble was invited to perform at a prestigious national music festival in Birmingham last year.

- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding grows well because staff throughout the school continually develop pupils' awareness of the wider world effectively. Senior leaders work successfully with charities and other organisations on several initiatives in school. For example, a project to develop pupils' self-awareness is helping some pupils talk more confidently about their feelings.
- The leadership of support for disadvantaged pupils has improved in the last year. Senior leaders are targeting the use of pupil premium funding more specifically and keeping a closer eye on the progress of these pupils. A newly appointed 'pupil premium ambassador' has ensured that teachers have a better awareness of disadvantaged pupils' needs. Senior leaders recognise that not all disadvantaged pupils yet make consistently good progress across all year groups.
- Recent leadership changes have ensured that provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities remains good and is improving. Teachers assess pupils' particular needs earlier and so the provision of support is more timely.

Governance of the school

- The governing body has taken action to improve its scrutiny of senior leaders' work since the governance review which followed the previous inspection. Governors have been trained in the interpretation of assessment data. Consequently, they are more perceptive in their questioning of senior leaders and more robust than before when challenging them.
- Governors understand the performance of the school and the impact of extra funding to support disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. They are aware of the need to raise the progress of a small number of disadvantaged pupils. Governors are suitably ambitious for all pupils because they compare pupils' progress in this school against similar schools nationally.
- Governors ensure that staff receive suitable training in safeguarding and that their statutory responsibilities are fulfilled. They exercise effective oversight over the school's finances. They have established reliable systems which ensure that teachers' performance, including that of the headteacher, is managed well.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Senior leaders have established a culture in which safeguarding is seen as everyone's responsibility. Appropriate checks are made on all staff to ensure that they are suitable to work with children. All staff are clear about their roles and the procedures they must follow if they have concerns about the welfare of a pupil. Senior leaders communicate well with outside agencies when necessary and they keep accurate records when they make referrals. The school's staff provide an effective programme for assessing and supporting pupils with emotional or mental health difficulties.

- Pupils feel safe and secure at school. Parents and carers believe their children are happy and well-looked after. The vast majority of parents who replied to the online survey Parent View would recommend this school to others.
- Senior leaders successfully promote positive messages about safeguarding with parents and pupils. They ensure that all staff are kept aware of their safeguarding responsibilities. Consequently, staff are highly vigilant.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching is improving because staff have become more reflective about their practice since the previous inspection. Teachers' planning takes account of pupils' consistently high starting points and so, in the majority of lessons, pupils receive work which they find challenging and interesting. For example, in history, Year 11 pupils were asked to think deeply about the wool trade during the reign of Edward I, and consider it from different perspectives. However, a small minority of teaching is still not sufficiently effective at extending pupils' understanding.
- Teachers are adept at using their considerable specialist knowledge to pose searching questions to pupils. They have benefited from training and sharing ideas with colleagues in other schools. Teachers' questioning draws out pupils' ideas and so helps pupils broaden their understanding by making links between different topics.
- Teachers have good relationships with pupils. Many pupils commented that teachers are approachable and give them extra help when they need it. These effective relationships make a strong contribution to pupils' progress.
- The school's system for assessing pupils' progress is well established. Teachers set targets for pupils' attainment which are suitably ambitious. Pupils know what is expected of them, but they also know where to find support if they are struggling to keep up with their work. Teachers set homework regularly and so extend pupils' learning.
- Teachers provide helpful feedback to pupils in line with the school's expectations. Pupils have time to reflect on their learning. As a result, most pupils have a good understanding of how to improve their work.
- Parents are informed about the progress their children are making through regular, clear reports. The school has recently made changes to the reporting process. While some parents are not satisfied with the reports they receive, the great majority believe the school provides them with valuable information.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities benefit from well organised and effective support which enables them to make good progress. Senior leaders continue to seek improvements to the support they offer these pupils.
- Teachers develop pupils' literacy skills well across a wide range of subjects. For example, when pupils write essays, teachers pay careful attention to the form and structure of their writing. Recent initiatives to support key stage 3 pupils who need extra help to improve their reading and writing have been effective.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are happy, self-confident individuals who speak clearly and articulately to adults. They take pride in their appearance and in the quality of their work. Efforts by the school to ensure that pupils take time and sufficient care over their work have paid off. Consequently, pupils' work in their books is well presented and accurate.
- Pupils confirm that the school teaches them about potential risks to their safety, such as the dangers posed by the internet. Senior leaders give clear messages that bullying, in all its forms, is unacceptable. In particular they have been unambiguous about homophobic bullying. Pupils say that, on the rare occasions when it occurs, staff take bullying very seriously and deal with it quickly.
- Pupils feel safe and secure at school. They know that there is always a member of staff to talk to if they have concerns about any aspect of their welfare. Senior leaders have made particular efforts to ensure that when pupils arrive in Year 7, they receive the nurture and emotional support necessary to make a successful transition from primary school. Staff offer further support to pupils as they move through the school to ensure that pupils' mental health needs are met.
- Senior leaders provide pupils with appropriate careers education and guidance at different stages through the school. Useful activities include individual careers interviews. Pupils value the information they receive through external speakers, for example concerning apprenticeships.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are polite and courteous to staff and visitors. Pupils are typically well disciplined. They have respect for the traditions of the school community and they are proud to belong to it.
- Pupils' conduct around the school site and in busy corridors is good. The school is well maintained and tidy.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons is very good. They are keen to learn and so cooperate well with their teachers and teaching assistants whom they fully respect.
- The rate of pupils' attendance in key stages 3 and 4 is above average and rising. Few pupils are persistently absent from school. Those who are receive effective support and encouragement to attend school more regularly.
- Senior leaders track incidents of poor behaviour closely. The school's records show that disruptive or disrespectful behaviour of any sort is extremely rare. Consequently, the rate of exclusion from the school is very low.
- A large majority of the parents who responded to the Parent View survey agree that the school makes sure that pupils are well behaved.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils' progress, measured across eight GCSE subjects, was above average in 2016 and 2017. The headteacher's emphasis on stretch and challenge has resulted in pupils, all of whom join the school in Year 7 with high levels of attainment, making good progress from their starting points.
- Pupils make very strong progress in GCSE mathematics. In 2016 pupils' progress was above average and in 2017 it improved further. Pupils enjoy mathematics. As a result of structured and challenging teaching, pupils continue to perform very well in this subject.
- Pupils' progress in GCSE English has been around the national average in the last two years. Work in pupils' books, and the school's assessments, show that current pupils in key stage 4 are making better progress than in recent years.
- At key stage 4, pupils' progress in physics, chemistry and biology has risen substantially in recent years and is now well above average. As a result of more effective subject leadership in sciences, pupils' progress in physics, chemistry and biology has risen substantially in recent years. It is now well above average. Pupils' outcomes in humanities and languages are above average.
- In key stage 3, across a range of subjects, pupils work diligently and achieve well. In design technology in particular, pupils make good progress because teaching is motivating them and equipping them with new skills. Where teaching is providing less challenge, for example in religious studies, pupils' motivation is weaker and they make slower progress.
- Pupils are confident and articulate. They are able to explain clearly what they are learning about in lessons, showing that they have a secure grasp of key concepts and ideas. Since the previous inspection, teachers have successfully made a concerted effort to ensure that pupils in all year groups routinely finish and present their work to a high standard.
- In 2016, the progress of the small proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged was as good as other pupils in the school. It was better than the progress made by other pupils nationally from similar starting points. In 2017, the progress of this group was not as strong and so senior leaders have provided them with extra help. This action is raising the achievement of most disadvantaged pupils, particularly in key stage 3.
- Teachers place a consistent emphasis on the quality of pupils' spelling, punctuation, grammar and handwriting. Pupils in Years 7 and 8 receive extra help with literacy skills where necessary. In particular, teachers' emphasis on developing pupils' enjoyment of reading is paying off. During the inspection, Year 9 pupils confidently described their favourite genres and authors.
- In a large majority of subjects, pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make good progress from their starting points as a result of the help they receive.
- Pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education, training or employment because a very high proportion of them attain the key qualifications they need to go on to further academic study or training.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- Sixth-form students follow academic courses in a wide range of subjects, a small number of them shared with a neighbouring girls' grammar school. Students' progress in 2017 was above average. Students achieved particularly well in A-level biology, computer studies and English literature.
- The leadership of the sixth form is effective. Senior leaders understand clearly the strengths and weaknesses of the sixth form. When there is a dip in students' progress, senior leaders identify quickly where changes need to be made. For example, students' progress in psychology has recovered quickly following weaker performance last year because leaders have taken swift action to improve teaching.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the sixth form is improving because, as in the main school, teachers have raised their expectations of what students with high academic starting points are capable of achieving. Across most subjects, teaching is suitably challenging and students achieve well as a result.
- Students provide good role models for the rest of the school community. Many students volunteer to act as helpers for younger pupils in the main school. Senior leaders enable many students to take on responsibilities, for example through a student leadership scheme. This helps to develop students' confidence and personal skills.
- Students receive good advice about which subjects to study in the sixth form. Consequently, they choose appropriate courses. A high proportion continue on their study programmes from Year 12 into Year 13, and so go on to complete their two-year courses.
- Students' attitudes are positive and optimistic. They appreciate the opportunities they have in the sixth form and many engage with extra-curricular activities wholeheartedly. Most use their independent study time wisely.
- Senior leaders' recent efforts to improve students' rates of attendance have had a positive impact. However, the rate of attendance in the sixth form, while rising, is still too low.
- Students receive timely advice about possibilities open to them when they leave. This advice forms part of a wider enrichment programme that provides, for example, appropriate work-related learning to develop students' employability skills. Senior leaders are taking steps to increase further students' engagement with work-based activity. A high proportion of students take up places at university when they leave the school.
- Safeguarding is effective in the sixth form because teachers are vigilant and consistently follow effective systems. Through a programme of events and outside speakers, students understand how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations.
- A very small number of students start 16 to 19 study programmes without attaining a grade 4 in GCSE English and/or mathematics. In recent years, when they resit these qualifications they all improve their grades and attain these minimum standards.

School details

Unique reference number	136850
Local authority	Poole
Inspection number	10042666

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Grammar (selective)
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Boys
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,190
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	300
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Ken Power
Headteacher	Andrew Baker
Telephone number	01202 692 132
Website	www.poolegrammar.com
Email address	pgsoffice@poolegrammar.com
Date of previous inspection	1–2 December 2015

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized secondary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is average. The proportion of pupils who are supported through pupil premium funding is well below average.
- The school admits pupils on the basis of ability. The school does not receive additional funding for Year 7 pupils who need to catch up with their English or mathematics.
- The school is a member of the Sigma Teaching School Alliance and the South West Academic Trust.

- The school provides initial teacher training through the Wessex Training Partnership.
- Some sixth-form courses are provided in collaboration with Parkstone Grammar School.
- No pupils attend off-site alternative provision.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' progress by the end of Year 11.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning across a wide range of subjects and age groups, some of which they conducted jointly with senior leaders. They scrutinised a wide range of pupils' written work.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation including minutes of governors' meetings, development plans, analysis of pupils' progress, attendance and behaviour logs, safeguarding documents and the school's review of its own performance.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders, middle leaders, groups of pupils in key stages 3 and 4 and students on 16 to 19 study programmes. Inspectors spoke with pupils and students informally at break and lunchtime.
- The lead inspector held phone conversations with a representative of the local authority and with two parents.
- Inspectors took account of 248 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, 215 responses to the pupil questionnaire and 72 responses to the staff questionnaire. Inspectors considered one letter from a parent.

Inspection team

Paul Williams, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Kay Taylor	Ofsted Inspector
Jerry Giles	Ofsted Inspector
Gill Hickling	Ofsted Inspector
Paul Nicholson	Ofsted Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

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. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2018