

Inspection of Parkstone Grammar School

Sopers Lane, Poole, Dorset BH17 7EP

Inspection dates:	20 and 21 May 2025
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

The headteacher of this school is David Hallsworth. This school is part of Parkstone Grammar School Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Alison Holme.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud of Parkstone Grammar School. Many are keen to represent the school in the local community. A very high standard of behaviour provides excellent conditions for learning. Pupils are happy and content. They enjoy their learning and are challenged by it. Pupils appreciate the considerable support that staff provide to ensure that they prepare well for examinations.

The school offers a broad curriculum, particularly in the sixth form, where students can choose from an impressive range of courses. Pupils and students achieve very well in most subjects. In the sixth form, there is a well-developed programme of enrichment activities, including volunteering. Students are taught academic research skills and encouraged to take on leadership roles, for example in sports or languages and as prefects.

The voice of pupils and students is strong in the school. The school 'cabinet' includes representation from all year groups. Pupils perform a wide range of important duties, leading as heads of houses, wellbeing and student voice ambassadors. The extra-curricular offer is designed so that pupils can 'find their tribe'. The school caters for a diverse range of special interests. This helps pupils to feel welcome and included.

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

The curriculum is wide-ranging. Pupils are encouraged to consider viewpoints drawn from different cultures and time periods. They find this enriching and value the insights they gain. In most subjects it is clear precisely what all pupils should know and be able to remember. In a few subjects, there remains a need for greater clarity as pupils do not all study the same, carefully considered selection of curriculum content over time.

Pupils are taught how to learn independently. They receive valuable feedback which they use to develop their thinking. There is an emphasis on trying out different approaches to study and revision, ensuring that pupils know which are the most effective. This continues into the sixth form. Increasingly, staff plan opportunities for pupils to revisit important knowledge during lessons.

The school identifies pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) quickly and effectively. Pupils with SEND are involved in the development of plans to support them. The culture of the school is one where pupils with SEND discuss their needs with staff, explaining what helps them to learn. Both the curriculum and teaching approaches are adapted accordingly.

Leaders are developing approaches to checking pupils' understanding of their learning more effectively. Sometimes teaching does not identify where pupils' understanding of new curriculum content is not secure. Where gaps in pupils' knowledge are brought to light, teaching is not consistently adapted in response. At times, pupils are presented with further information before they are ready. This reduces achievement in some subjects.

Many pupils are keen readers. They enjoy borrowing from the school's well-stocked library and recognise the efforts made to showcase diverse authors. This has a greater impact for pupils in key stage 3, who use the library routinely.

Pupils show commitment to their learning. They listen attentively and interact well together. The school is developing pupils' confidence in discussion and with more formal uses of spoken language, such as debating and presenting. Pupils are rewarded when they make effective oral contributions in class.

Pupils' attendance is significantly above the national average. Recently, leaders have brought about clear improvements in the attendance of disadvantaged pupils, including pupils with SEND. The school is beginning to have success in raising expectations in the sixth form, where attendance is not as strong as it is in the rest of the school.

An array of clubs and societies provides rich opportunities for personal growth. Most pupils get involved. The curriculum promotes pupils' wellbeing and prepares them for life in modern Britain. The school is re-designing the wellbeing programme of study so that each element contributes to the school's aim of developing pupils' resilience and self-assurance. Currently, the school is not clear which ideas and values pupils are learning well or need to revisit.

Careers education is very effective. The vast majority of pupils continue in education after they leave the school. Each year, a few secure apprenticeships, including at degree level. The school runs a large-scale careers convention which is popular with pupils of all ages.

The school benefits from ambitious leadership. Leaders engage with staff positively and understand the main pressures on them. They bring in external advice to help them to improve the school. Trustees recognise that their ongoing work to improve the school requires a more strategic approach, informed by a detailed analysis of what is working well and for which pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Recent improvements in the use of assessment are not fully embedded across the school. In some subjects, where pupils' understanding is not secure, this can go unnoticed before new curriculum content is introduced. The school should ensure that teaching is consistently responsive when checks on learning indicate that pupils have not yet developed confidence with the subject matter.
- At the strategic level, development work is not consistently informed by an incisive analysis of information that the school gathers to help it to understand pupils'

experiences. As a result, some improvement strategies are not focused where they could make the most difference. The school should ensure that self-evaluation processes reliably identify the key aspects of the provision to improve.

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	136368
Local authority	Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole
Inspection number	10378916
Type of school	Grammar (selective)
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Girls
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	1222
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	303
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Alison Holme
Headteacher	David Hallsworth
Website	www.parkstone.poole.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	17 and 18 April 2024, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This is a grammar school for girls in Poole. The admissions policy is selective.
- The school is the only member of the Parkstone Grammar School Trust single academy trust.
- The school partners with the local grammar school for boys to offer a broad curriculum in the sixth form. Some students travel between sites to attend their courses.
- The chair of the board of trustees was appointed in December 2024.
- The school currently uses three registered providers of alternative provision.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

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, members of the senior leadership team, the chair, vice-chair, and three other members of the governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, modern foreign languages, art, and religion and philosophy. 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 visited lessons and discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- 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

Lydia Pride, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Richard Barnes	Ofsted Inspector
Helen Kerr	Ofsted Inspector
Mike Foley	Ofsted Inspector
John Weeds	Ofsted Inspector

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