

# Inspection of Pewsey Vale School

Wilcot Road, Pewsey, Wiltshire SN9 5EW

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Inspection dates: 7 and 8 February 2023

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Requires improvement**

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The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Good**

Personal development

**Good**

Leadership and management

**Requires improvement**

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pewsey Vale is a welcoming and inclusive school. Pupils say that staff know them as individuals. Pupils feel safe and say that bullying is rare. Pupils are confident to report to staff any incidents that occur. They know that staff take these seriously and act on pupils' concerns quickly. Leaders have created a culture where discriminatory behaviour or derogatory language are not acceptable. Pupils are respectful towards staff and each other.

Nonetheless, too many pupils and parents and carers are unhappy with the quality of education provided by the school. Pupils do not have a consistently positive experience of learning across different classes and subjects. They are not supported to learn the curriculum well enough.

The school offers extracurricular clubs, such as for debating and bike mechanics. Pupils can be 'navigators', who represent their peers by raising issues and ideas with school leaders. However, some pupils say that they do not participate in any of these activities.

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

Leaders have considered the aim of each subject's curriculum carefully. They have planned the knowledge that they want pupils to learn. However, teachers' use of assessment is not effective in checking whether pupils have done so. Therefore, gaps in pupils' knowledge of the curriculum persist. Pupils do not retain the depth of knowledge that they need in all subjects. Leaders, including governors, do not have sufficient oversight of how effective the curriculum is in extending pupils' knowledge and skills.

Some pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) do not receive enough support with their learning. As a result, some pupils with SEND do not make progress through the curriculum.

Leaders have not yet fully established a love of reading across the school. Some pupils do read regularly, and teachers encourage them to extend the range of what they read. However, too many pupils choose not to read for pleasure, either in or out of school. Pupils at the early stages of learning to read do not currently receive phonics teaching to help them to read accurately and fluently.

Pupils know about the fundamental British values, such as tolerance, and say that everyone is treated equally. Leaders have recently revised their approach to managing pupils' behaviour. This has been effective in establishing the expectations that staff have of pupils. Staff, parents and pupils are positive about this change.

Pupils learn about important topics that contribute to their personal development, such as healthy relationships, online safety and knife crime. The curriculum is relevant and appropriate to pupils' ages.

The careers programme is well planned and responds to the needs and interests of pupils. Leaders arrange for all pupils to have a careers interview. Pupils value this experience as it gives them useful information to consider for their future. The school has established helpful links with the local college. Leaders are reintroducing work experience for pupils in Year 10 this year following the disruption caused by COVID-19.

Staff, including early career teachers, feel that leaders support them well. They say that leaders are approachable. Staff believe that leaders consider their well-being when introducing any changes.

Governors are committed to the school. They work regularly with leaders and have increased the level of scrutiny and challenge posed to school leaders. However, they have not dealt with weaknesses in the quality of education quickly enough.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have made positive changes to the system for reporting and recording safeguarding concerns. Staff understand the new system. It provides a detailed oversight of vulnerable pupils. Leaders act quickly to secure help for pupils when required, including by working with external agencies.

Staff and governors complete regular and appropriate safeguarding training. The process for recruitment is clear and includes all the checks required to ensure that staff are suitable to work with pupils.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, including when online. Leaders provide education on harmful sexual behaviours for all pupils. Pupils know who the members of school's safeguarding team are. They say that they have a trusted adult whom they can go to.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Leaders do not have a clear enough picture of the quality of education that the school provides. Consequently, they are unable to take swift and effective action to make improvements. Leaders should ensure that they have an accurate overview of the quality of education that pupils receive.
- Teachers do not always use assessment effectively to check what pupils know and remember. As a result, some teaching does not remedy gaps or misconceptions in pupils' knowledge and understanding of the curriculum. Leaders should ensure that assessment supports pupils to build their knowledge and retain it in their long-term memory.

- Some pupils with SEND, including those who need help with their reading, do not receive timely or appropriate support. As a result, they find parts of the curriculum difficult to follow. Leaders should ensure that pupils in the early stages of learning to read receive the right support.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	136849
<b>Local authority</b>	Wiltshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10256715
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	366
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Tracy Richards
<b>Headteacher</b>	Neil Pritchard
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.pewsey-vale.org">www.pewsey-vale.org</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	8 July 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized secondary school for pupils aged 11 to 16 years.
- The school uses two unregistered alternative providers.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 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.

- This was the second routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, other members of the senior leadership team, the special educational needs coordinator, curriculum leaders, and the chair and vice-chair of governors.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, geography and art. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, looked at curriculum planning, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors scrutinised the single central record of adults working in the school. The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead to consider how well the school identifies pupils who are at risk and engages with external services. Inspectors also spoke with a range of pupils and staff about safeguarding.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for parents and carers, Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. Inspectors also considered responses to the staff survey and responses to the survey for pupils.

### **Inspection team**

Kelly Olive, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Alun Williams

Ofsted Inspector

Will Morgan

Ofsted Inspector

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