



Q&A - 8th December 2023

1) Why is the school no longer Outstanding?

As the Ofsted inspectors said to us, we just need more time, we are absolutely on the right path.

The Vineyard School was last inspected by Ofsted in June 2013. Since then, the Ofsted inspection process has changed significantly, the last major change being in September 2019. At the June 2013 inspection, pupil progress and achievement data in reading, writing and mathematics was the major driver of the Ofsted grade. Since 2019, the school's design of a broad curriculum which is accessible to all pupils has become the dominant component. There is a change in emphasis from the skills pupils learn, to the knowledge that they acquire. We have been working to develop our curriculum in line with this focus since 2022, and the progress made since this time was recognised by inspectors.

This broader measure of a school and education is much welcomed. However, Ofsted now requires schools to meet or exceed approximately 80 statements in order to gain an outstanding rating; this is a much more challenging and exacting standard than under the previous framework. Indeed, out of 3,720 inspections carried out in 2022-23, only 7% of schools were awarded an outstanding rating. The bar for good is high and in order to achieve a good rating, schools must achieve a best fit of these 80 statements. Amanda Spielman, the Chief Inspector, has stated that it is her intention to reduce the number of schools rated outstanding.

Ofsted now inspects the quality of the curriculum in all subjects, including subjects such as PE and art. For each subject, the curriculum must be well-organised with each year's learning building on earlier years, and with assessment processes to check pupils' understanding. We have worked hard on our curriculum plans and the final stage is to add the assessment processes, which are there for some subjects in the broader curriculum but not all. Our assessment processes in the core subjects of reading, writing, mathematics and science are very well-developed.

In 2013 Vineyard pupils scored in the top 11% of schools nationally for their KS2 results. In 2023, Vineyard pupils were in the top 3% nationally for their progress results for reading, top 9% for mathematics and top 12% for writing, with very strong scores in attainment at both the expected and higher level. Our reading results at both KS1 and KS2 were also exceptionally strong.

2) Does the school think that this is a fair result?

The school is proud of this Ofsted grading and feel that the inspection was fair and supportive. We have ambitious plans for our school and these take time to embed and evolve. For example, we added the final step in our geography curriculum, a field day for all pupils, just before half-term. The school graded itself as good in its self-evaluation, which we shared with parents last year. One of the features of this inspection was that all the next steps that the inspectors identified had already been identified by the leadership team.



3) Why did the school have an inspection?

All schools in England are on a schedule to be inspected. At one stage, schools previously judged as outstanding, as The Vineyard, were exempt from further inspection. However, this policy was reversed in 2020 and Ofsted is keen to inspect all these schools as soon as it can.

4) When will the next inspection be?

We can expect our next inspection in around 4 years.

5) Why has the curriculum taken so long to develop? Surely you need a curriculum in order to teach pupils?

Since 2022 we have been redesigning our curriculum so that it is bespoke to The Vineyard taking into account our demographics, location and school values. This process for each subject area takes time to ensure that we are providing the children with the knowledge and skills they need for the next steps of their education. We are proud of the curricula we have created for history, geography, science, art, music, PE, personal social and emotional education, computing, French and reading. The inspectors commented that these curricula are ambitious and support the needs of the children. We are now finishing our curricula for religious education (RE) and design and technology (D&T). The RE curriculum is due to be launched in spring term and D&T in the summer. Due to these curricula and assessment processes not being finalised yet, we self evaluated ourselves as good and the inspectors agreed.

6) Why are there not more Outstanding features – for early years, behaviour, leadership and management?

The Ofsted grading system marks the school on several characteristics. There is an 'overall effectiveness' grade and one each for 'quality of education', 'behaviour and attitudes', 'leadership and management', 'personal development' and 'early years'. Of these key judgements, 'quality of education' has the most statements that a school must meet or exceed.

The 'overall effectiveness' of the school will be judged good if all the key judgements are either good or outstanding; an 'overall effectiveness' grading of outstanding can only be reached if all the key judgements are also outstanding. 'Leadership and management' can not be graded outstanding if the 'quality of education' is not graded outstanding. The inspector said that 'leadership and management' was a very strong good and the school was clear about its next steps. 'Behaviour and attitudes' was also assessed as a strong good while 'personal development' was graded outstanding.



7) Should I be concerned about this grading and send my child to my closest Outstanding school?

Under the current framework to have areas described as 'strong good' means that The Vineyard is a very good school, which is an extremely good result under this new and exacting framework. Pupils achieve as well academically in the core subjects as they have ever done.

Personal development is particularly important for a primary school and looks at the broader measures of a pupil's experience at the school. The outstanding rating for 'personal development', highlights that our children leave The Vineyard well prepared for secondary school and have had excellent opportunities to develop their talent and interests. They have grown into confident, resilient and independent pupils with a strong sense of fairness. We have developed curious, courageous and caring children.

8) What will the school do to address the issues raised by Ofsted?

We are pleased to report that the Ofsted next steps are exactly the same steps that the school leadership had already identified and are in the school development plan for 2023-25. This means that the school will continue working towards its development plan.

9) Why have other schools managed to complete their curriculum plans on time and retain an outstanding rating?

Few schools have managed to complete this change with the added complications of the Covid epidemic and the move to remote teaching which meant that most schools' plans for developing the broader curriculum were put on hold. The Vineyard school was probably particularly unfortunate in the timing of the headteacher changes, leaving the new headship team with a lot of ground to cover. This started with a review of the school's values which are the foundations of our whole curriculum.

10) I thought safeguarding was important - what did the inspectors say about this?

Our safeguarding procedures were judged as effective. Safeguarding is either judged as effective or ineffective. If safeguarding is ineffective, the school is likely to be graded inadequate. Aside from speaking to the leaders about the safeguarding processes, safeguarding is judged throughout the inspection. Inspectors commented on how robust our procedures are and were completely satisfied with the provision in place.

11) How is staff morale after the inspection?

Staff morale is high. We are very proud of all the hard work that we have done together as a team in a short period of time. Verbally the inspectors were very positive about the direction in which the school is going.